

Agathias on the Sassanians

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AGATHIAS ON THE SASSANIANS

AVERIL CAMERON

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

THE Byzantine historian Agathias includes in his continuation of Procopius' *Wars* two long excursuses on Persia, the first (II.25ff.) on religion, the second (IV.24ff.) on Sassanian history, or rather, the annals of the Sassanian kings. These excursuses are of importance as an illustration of Agathias' method, in which they are closely paralleled by his excursus on the early Merovingians (I.2ff.).¹ But they have a wider and greater importance for the information which they preserve. Agathias used material supplied to him by his friend Sergius, a leading interpreter who on a visit to Persia specially transcribed for Agathias extracts from the Persian Royal Annals (IV.30, p. 134.284f.). This annalistic material is uniquely valuable. The Royal Annals (see note on IV.30, p. 134.285) certainly formed the main source of the Pahlavī Khvadhāynāmagh (Book of Lords), which in turn provided the material for the *Shahnameh*, the Persian national epic. Apart from what Agathias tells us, our earliest substantial evidence for the Khvadhāynāmagh tradition comes from Persian and Arabic chroniclers writing in the ninth century and later, when the tradition had become heavily contaminated. Nothing survives of official Sassanian literature—indeed hardly any Sassanian literature at all—and, aside from some important inscriptions, the political history of the Sassanian Empire has to be written largely from the Khvadhāynāmagh tradition as represented in late chronicles. It is vital, therefore, to try to sort out and isolate the genuine annalistic material in Agathias' account, for a good deal of what he says, particularly in the second excursus, represents an earlier stratum of the official record than is preserved elsewhere.

What follows is an attempt, in the form of a commentary, to do just that. Agathias has often, though not always, been recognized by Orientalists as a source of primary importance. But no one before this has made a systematic attempt to evaluate his evidence. My purpose here is not to give either a critical account of Sassanian religion or a history of the Sassanian Empire, but to provide some means of distinguishing the good from the bad in Agathias' evidence. Several problems need to be faced before placing trust in his statements, and some of them can only be solved by considering his historical method in general.² Both excursuses mix in with the hard information a quantity of decoration and moralizing provided by Agathias himself. Again, both owe a debt to Procopius, even at the very point where Agathias explicitly disclaims it (see on IV.28, p. 130.217f.). The excursus on religion presents the popularized impression of an outsider, not the informed comment of one who really understood it. The second excursus lends support to Agathias' own

¹ See my commentary, "Agathias on the Early Merovingians," *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa*, Ser. 2, 37 (1968), 95ff.

² See my *Agathias* (Oxford, 1970).

statement (p. 134.294f.) that Sergius abbreviated what he derived from the Annals, so that caution is needed in accepting at face value Agathias' accounts of some of the shorter reigns. Further, both excursuses have an admixture of non-Oriental material. Nor is all of Agathias' account, as we might otherwise have expected, told from the Persian side. Only Nöldeke³ has explicitly recognized (and then without developing the point) that some of Agathias' Sassanian history has a Syrian, *anti*-Persian slant, very probably unnoticed by Agathias himself.

We are unfortunately dealing with an author who had only the remotest (though nonetheless lively—see II.27, p. 88.197f.) idea of the real worth of his material, and even less of the right way to use it. In the two cases where he tells us explicitly that what he says comes from the Royal Annals, he is in one case mistaken (p. 88.196f.) and in the other misleading (IV.30, p. 134.300f.).

The two excursuses are very different. The first, dealing with Persian religion, contains little material directly from the Annals. The contemporary evidence in it must derive from supplementary information provided by Sergius, and as an account of Sassanian Zoroastrianism it is hardly satisfactory. Further, it is heavily interlaced with Agathias' own deductions and interpretations, often mistaken. Where the second excursus is in the main a straightforward presentation of the Annalistic material, the first is far more elaborately treated (with bad results from our point of view). At least, however, it is not contaminated by references to the other chief Greek accounts of Persian religion, for it seems that Agathias did not know them. In view of the controversial nature of the whole subject of Zoroastrianism, I have tried here to keep my commentary as factual as possible, concentrating on the task of distinguishing Agathias' own comments from the hard information he preserves, and where possible of tracing his sources in the places where he diverges from Sergius' account.

With the second excursus the procedure is much clearer and simpler. This section consists largely of a chronological account of the Sassanian dynasty from Ardashēr I to Chosroes I. Most of this can be directly collated with the surviving Khvadhāynāmagh tradition in the later chronicles, sometimes with interesting results. The problems are those of distinguishing the parts where Agathias' account shows Syrian bias and those where he departs from the annalistic material for non-Oriental sources. The latter case rarely arises, and where it does it proves the limitations of Agathias' range; he seems to have had little idea of the Western accounts of the years which he covers, nor on the whole does he trouble to insert any allusions to the Greek or Roman versions of the events he describes. This means that, as source material for Sassanian Persia, the second excursus is a good deal more valuable than the first, nor is the issue confused by the sort of controversy that centers among modern scholars on the subject of Persian religion.

³ Th. Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sasaniden. Aus der arabischen Chronik des Ṭabarī übersetzt* (Leiden, 1879).

This commentary is not, as will be clear, the work of an Orientalist. Consequently, Orientalists may find details at which they can cavil. My hope, however, is to have made things a little easier for them by providing an analysis of a source which, though vitally important, needs a sympathetic as well as a firm dissection. For Byzantinists and those interested in Agathias as a historian and a writer I hope to have provided an interesting analysis of his methods, his limitations, and his strengths. For, although there is much to criticize in his presentation of these two excursuses, to have conceived them at all is a remarkable achievement. Together with that on the Merovingians, these excursuses show an independence of mind which, despite all the conventionality and the rhetoric, Agathias shows elsewhere in his *History* too.

The orthography I have used is based in the main on that of A. Christensen, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides*, 2nd rev. ed. (Copenhagen, 1944). In an awkward matter it seemed best to approach at least basic uniformity. I have given some bibliographical help in the introductions to the two separate excursuses, and there is a general bibliography of works cited. As will be clear, I have used Oriental sources in translation. This procedure is more defensible than it might appear, firstly because what is at issue here is not points of expression or the formulation of a phrase, but simple factual information, and secondly because in many cases, although the translation used is a nineteenth-century one, there is no more modern text in the original language. If some of my references, particularly in the commentary on the second excursus, seem to be to old editions and equally old scholarly works, it is simply because there is a great need of solid modern work in this field. New work in recent years has naturally concentrated on the great Sassanian inscriptions of Shahpūr I and Kartēr (only available in reliable transcriptions since the late 1950's), as on the ever popular subjects of Sassanian art and Sassanian religion. In the field of Sassanian history and in the re-editing of texts there is great need of new work.

I include here, with a simple translation for convenience, the relevant portions of the standard edition of the *History*, by R. Keydell, CFHB, 2 (Berlin, 1967), by kind permission of the editor and of W. de Gruyter Ltd. Since, however, the pagination and line numbering have had to be altered, all references in the commentary to the portions of the text reprinted here are to the page and line numbers of the present work. References to parts of the *History* not reprinted here are given with page and line numbers from Keydell's edition. The Bonn page numbers are given at the head of Keydell's pages, and are added in the margin in my text.

This commentary was begun at Glasgow University and formed part of a doctoral thesis at the University of London. I am grateful to Professor R. Browning for setting my thoughts in this direction and to Professor A. Momigliano for constant friendly help and encouragement. I have had further help and advice from Professors R. N. Frye and R. Keydell. I was enabled to finish the work in the peaceful surroundings of the Dumbarton Oaks Library; I am grateful for this hospitality, and also to the Publications Committee for

making it possible for this commentary to appear in the Dumbarton Oaks Papers. Mrs. F. Bonajuto too deserves my gratitude for her care in dealing with this difficult manuscript. But I owe the greatest debt to my husband, Alan Cameron, for his constant help, his lasting patience, and above all for the stimulus of his ideas in our common interest in the later Roman Empire.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

The following should be particularly noted:

- AJSLL* *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*
BSOS *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*
BZ *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*
CFHB *Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae*
CQ *Classical Quarterly*
CSCO *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*
CSHB *Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae*
FGrHist F. Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, 5 vols. in 16 pts. (Berlin and Leiden, 1923–1958)
FHG C. Müller, *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, 5 vols. (Paris, 1841–1883)
GCS *Die griechische christliche Schriftsteller*
HThR *Harvard Theological Review*
JA *Journal Asiatique*
JAOS *Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JNES *Journal of the Near Eastern Society*
JRAS *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*
JRS *Journal of Roman Studies*
PG *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca*, ed. J.-P. Migne
RE *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, new ed., by G. Wissowa et al.
SBE *The Sacred Books of the East*
ZDMG *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*

For further abbreviations, consult the Bibliography

I

AGATHIAS ON PERSIAN RELIGION AND CUSTOMS

INTRODUCTION

This excursus claims to be an account of the customs and religious beliefs of the Sassanians at the time when Agathias was writing, the latter years of the reign of Chosroes I. In fact it is a hotchpotch of genuine information, Greek tradition, technical chronography, and pure speculation and interpretation by Agathias himself. It is, incidentally, the passage where Agathias' approach to source material can best be tested, and where he comes off worst. Whereas the second Persian excursus is on the whole a straight record of the Sassanian Annals as reported to Agathias by Sergius, mixed only with material taken from Procopius, the first is based on a far smaller proportion of hard information, and was therefore the more vulnerable to "literary" ornamentation.

Agathias certainly thought that here, as well as in the second excursus, he was using material from the Persian Royal Annals (cf. p. 88.196f.). It so happens, however, that he is wrong on the very point for which he claims such reliable evidence (note *ad loc.*), for what he says there about the birth of Ardashēr clearly comes from a popular source. And since the Annals hardly contained a resume of the principles of Sassanian religion (for their content, see *infra*, p. 115f.), he can have had no such documentary evidence for most of what he says in this excursus. Probably his knowledge of Persian dualism and Persian customs derives from what Sergius told him, in addition to his material from the Annals. If so, then Agathias' remarks are at best second-hand and at worst subject to the misunderstanding of Sergius as well as Agathias' own reinterpretation. With this material he has mixed details from Procopius (see on p. 82.101), stories from his own reading (see on p. 80.53f. for Semiramis and Parysatis, and p. 86.162f. for Smerdis), chronographical material of a highly technical kind (p. 84.109f.) and, finally, his own comments and deductions (cf. on pp. 80.53f., 86.162f.). There is no attempt, of course, to signal a change of source; the task of working them out is left to us. Thus, pp. 78.1 to 80.53 come mainly from Sergius (i.e., are genuinely Oriental material), but at p. 80.53 there starts a passage which is an amalgam of Ctesian story and Agathian comment. Another piece of contemporary information (p. 80.65f.) is sandwiched between the tale of Parysatis and a garbled account of early Persian religion based on sources which we are in no position to check (notes *ad locc.*). More information about Sassanian dualism follows (p. 82.82f.), and then what is probably an echo of Procopius (p. 82.98f.). The middle of the excursus (p. 84.109f.) is occupied by a long digression within a digression, on Persian chronology, which has nothing to do with Agathias' Oriental material. This part presents its own problems, for it seems to tell us something about Alexan-

der Polyhistor's Χαλδαϊκὰ. But they are not problems which concern an Orientalist. At the end of this section Agathias suddenly deserts his chronological source for a piece of genuine Persian information of great interest, which may indeed have come from the Annals (see on p. 86.150). Back to Sergius again for Agathias' account of Ardashēr—which does not, despite his claim (p. 88.196f.), originate in the Annals. But it is typical of him that he ends the excursus (p. 88.213f.) with a synchronization that very probably comes from the same source as the admirable Seleucid date he gives elsewhere (p. 120.17), in conspicuous conflict with the garbled figures in p. 84.109f.

Despite this, he has some useful contemporary information to offer, once it has been isolated. He is the more valuable in that he does not seem to know of other standard accounts of Persian religion in Greek sources (notably Herodotus, the pseudo-Platonic *Alcibiades*, Plutarch's *De Iside*, and Strabo, on all of which see R. C. Zaehner, *The Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism*, [London, 1961]). At least his account is free of contamination from that quarter. It has indeed been argued (by G. Franke, *Quaestiones Agathianae*, Breslauer Abhandl., 47 [Breslau, 1914]) that his whole excursus is heavily influenced by imitation of Herodotus. This would, if true, be important. Herodotus' account of Persian religion (I.131f.) gives rise to many difficulties of interpretation (Zaehner, *op. cit.*, with bibliography). But, however the details are explained, the fact remains that it relates to the Achaemenid period. If Agathias could be shown to have used Herodotus, his value as a source for *Sassanian* religion would be seriously diminished. But, as I have argued in detail already ("Herodotus and Thucydides in Agathias," *BZ*, 57 [1964], 33ff.), such dependence cannot be proved; indeed, there are strong reasons against it. The alleged borrowings themselves are unconvincing, the likeness being no more than would be inevitable through similarity of subject matter. In addition, however, Herodotus makes a sharp distinction between popular and Magian practice, which is unknown to Agathias; even Agathias must have noticed this difference, had he had this part of Herodotus' work in mind. In fact, as I argue in the article cited above, Agathias' linguistic borrowings from Herodotus are very limited in scope. He does know and use certain portions and certain stories from Herodotus, but that hardly proves that he must have gone to Herodotus for Persian religion. Further, when he comes to the chronological section, Agathias follows the Ctesian tradition which differed diametrically from the Herodotean. If he had used Herodotus in the way that is suggested, it must surely have struck him that Herodotus' information on Persia was quite unlike what Sergius had told him about current practice; and since this excursus already contains so many examples of Agathias interpreting his Persian material in the light of remembered scraps from Greek sources, the argument from silence has some force. The truth is that Agathias' hard information on Persian religion was all contemporary. He did not trouble to seek out the important Greek accounts and collate them with his own, but was content to rely for comparison on his own surmise and on well-known stories usually stemming from the ubiquitous Ctesian tradition.

Agathias thought that he was telling us how modern Persians (Πέρσαις τοῖς νῦν —p. 80.65) differed from the Persians of earlier times. There are two dividing lines, marking distinct changes in Persian religion—the teachings of Zoroaster (p. 80.65f.) and the religious reforms of Ardashēr (p. 86.160f.). We must however be careful not to attach much importance to the dating which Agathias attributes to the various features which he describes, for it is clear that he has only a hazy idea of Iranian religion before Zoroaster or of Zoroaster's date itself and the placing of his teachings in their context (see notes on pp. 80.44f., 80.49f., 80.53f., and p. 97, *infra*). Very naturally, he attributes all the distinctive features of Sassanian religion to Zoroaster. That he did not have in the material from Sergius any distinct statement about the historical development of Iranian religion beyond personal details about Zoroaster is evident from the fact that his attempts to set Sassanian customs in perspective are based on his own deductions from non-Oriental evidence (e.g., the stories of Semiramis, Parysatis, and Smerdis and the detail, presumably derived from Sergius, that there were tombs in parts of the Persian Empire despite the Sassanian practice of exposure). We should therefore take as good evidence only those statements which are clearly referring to contemporary Sassanian practice, and not mistake Agathias' deductions for more than they are.

Once the contemporary material is isolated, there is no reason why we should deny it credibility. Sergius had access through the priests to the Royal Annals; it is likely then that his information about religion is based on good sources too, for he will have known about it from those best qualified to give him information. It remains the impression of an outsider, no more than a generalized picture, but it is a contemporary picture which we can in the main accept. If I am right in tracing to Sergius the signs of Syrian-Christian bias in the second Persian excursus (*infra*, p. 113), then Sergius will not himself have been very sympathetic to Zoroastrianism; its theological subtleties as well as any discrepancies there might be between popular and official versions will have been lost on him. Agathias could not improve on what he heard from Sergius, for Sergius was his only source of authentic material. So, from the point of view of Iranian scholars it is regrettable that he *did* try to improve on it by the only way open to him, that of personal interpretation.

NOTE:

There exists a brief commentary on part of this passage in J. Bidez and F. Cumont, *Les mages hellénisés* (Paris, 1938), II, 84f., and a discussion in C. Clemen, *Die griechischen und lateinischen Nachrichten über die persischen Religion*, Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten, Band 17, Heft 1 (Giessen, 1920), 199f. I have kept bibliographical references on individual points to a minimum; this is not the place for discussion of the features mentioned by Agathias in themselves. The whole subject of Zoroastrianism, moreover, is still so much a battleground for conflicting theories, and there is so much discrepancy between rival inter-

pretations that I have tried to confine myself so far as possible to the elucidation of what Agathias actually says rather than its interpretation. J. Duchesne-Guillemin, *The Western Response to Zoroaster* (Oxford, 1958), gives an exhaustive account of Western Zoroastrian studies. The same author's *La religion de l'Iran ancien*, "Mana." Introduction à l'histoire des religions, vol. I, 3 (Paris, 1962), provides a very useful general survey of Zoroastrian studies and problems, with full critical conspectus of modern works. There is also an excellent critical bibliography in Zaehner, *The Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism*, 339ff.

I

TEXT

113.11 B II. 22. . . . 6 τότε δὴ τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Μερμερόου οἱ ἀμφ' αὐτὸν ἀνελόμενοι καὶ ἐκτός που τοῦ ἄστεος ἀποκομίσαντες, οὕτω δὴ ἔρημόν τε καὶ ἀκάλυπτον κατὰ τὸν πάτριον ἔθεντο νόμον, κυσί τε ἅμα καὶ τῶν ὀρνέων τοῖς ὅσα μιὰρὰ καὶ νεκροβόρα, παρανάλωμα γενησόμενον.

5 23. ὤδε γὰρ τὰ ἐς τὴν ταφὴν οἱ Πέρσαι νομίζουσι, ταύτη τε τῶν σαρκῶν ἀφαιρουμένων γυμνὰ δὴ τὰ ὁστᾶ πύθεται σποράδην ἀνὰ τὰ πεδία περιερριμμένα. θήκη γάρ τινι ἐμβαλεῖν ἢ λάρνακι τοὺς τεθνεῶτας ἢ καὶ τῇ γῇ καταχωννύναι ἥκιστα θέμις αὐτοῖς. 2 ἐφ' ὅτῳ δὲ ἂν σώματι 114 B μὴ θᾶττον κατα|πταῖεν οἱ ὄρνεις ἢ οἱ κύνες οὐκ αὐτίκα ἐπιφοιτῶντες δια-
10 σπαράξαιεν, τοῦτον δὲ ἡγοῦνται τὸν ἀνθρωπον βέβηλον γεγονέναι τοὺς τρόπους καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἄδικον καὶ βαρυσώδη καὶ τῷ κακῷ δαίμονι ἀνειμένην. τότε δὴ οὖν καὶ μᾶλλον οἱ ἐπιτήδαιοι τὸν κείμενον ὀλοφύρονται, ὡς τελεώτατα τεθνηκότα καὶ οὐ μετὸν αὐτῷ τῆς κρείττονος μοίρας. 3 ὃς δὲ ἂν τάχιστα καταβρωθεῖ, μακαρίζουσι τῆς εὐδαιμονίας καὶ τὴν 15 ψυχὴν ὑπεράγανται ὡς λίαν ἀρίστην καὶ θεοείκελον καὶ ἐς τὸν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ χῶρον ἀναβησομένην. 4 οἱ δὲ πολλοὶ καὶ ἀσημότεροι εἴ που ἐν στρατοπέδῳ τύχοιεν νόσῳ τινὶ δυσκολωτάτῃ πεπιεσμένοι, ἔμπνοι ἔτι ἄγονται καὶ νηφάλιοι. ἐπειδὴν δὲ τις οὕτως ἐκτεθεῖ, ἄρτου τρύφος αὐτῷ καὶ ὕδωρ καὶ βακτηρία ξυμπαράκειται· καὶ μέχρι μὲν οἷός τε εἴη τῆς 20 ἐδωδῆς ἀπογεύεσθαι καὶ τι δυνάμεως αὐτῷ ὑπολείποιτο, ὃ δὲ ἀμύνεται ταύτῃ δὴ τῇ βακτηρίᾳ τὰ ἐπιόντα τῶν ζώων καὶ ἀποσοβεῖ τοὺς δαιτυμόνας. 5 εἰ δὲ οὕτω μὲν πάμπαν διαφθαρείη, νικῶν δὲ ὁμῶς τὰ τῆς νόσου ὡς μηκέτι κινεῖσθαι τῷ χεῖρι, τότε δὴ τὸν δέιλαιον ἡμιθνήτα καὶ ἄρτι ψυχορραγεῖν ἀρχόμενον κατεσθίουσι καὶ προαφαιροῦνται τὴν 25 ἐλπίδα τοῦ ἴσως ἂν καὶ περιέσεσθαι. 6 πολλοὶ γὰρ ἤδη ἀναρρωσθέντες ἀπενόστησαν ἐς τὰ οἰκεῖα, καθάπερ ἐν σκηνῇ καὶ τραγωδίᾳ ἐκ τῶν σκότου πυλῶν ἀφιγμένοι, ἰσχυροὶ τινες καὶ ἐνερόχρωτες καὶ οἷοι δεδίττεσθαι τοὺς ἐντυγ|χάνοντας. 7 εἰ δὲ τις οὕτως ἐπανήξει, ἐκτρέπονται γε αὐτὸν 115 B ἅπαντες καὶ ἀποφεύγουσιν ὡς ἐναγέστατον καὶ ὑπὸ τοὺς χθονίους ἔτι 30 τελοῦντα, καὶ οὐ πρότερόν οἱ ἐφείται τῶν ξυνήθων μεταλαχεῖν διαιτημάτων, πρὶν ὑπὸ τῶν μάγων ἀποκαθαρθεῖ τὸ μίasma δῆθεν τοῦ ἐλπισθέντος θανάτου καὶ οἷον ἀνταπολάβοι τὸ αὐθις βιώσαι. 8 καὶ εὐδῆλον

I

TRANSLATION

At that time then the attendants of Mihr-Mihroe took up 113.11 B
his body and removed it to a place outside the city and laid
it there as it was, alone and uncovered according to their
traditional custom, as refuse for dogs and horrible carrion
birds.

For this is the Persian funeral practice: the flesh is removed 113.16 B
in this way and the exposed bones rot, scattered at random
all over the plain. They consider it irreligious to place the
dead in a tomb or container, or even to bury them in the
ground. And if the birds do not fly down upon a body quickly,
or if the dogs do not come up at once and tear it to pieces,
they hold that this man was profane in his ways and that his
soul is wicked and doomed, given over to the power of evil.
So then his relatives mourn all the more for the dead man,
thinking him truly perished and with no share in the higher
life. But if a body is devoured quickly they congratulate the
dead man on his good fortune and marvel at his soul, believing
that it is virtuous and godlike and destined for the dwelling
of the power of good.

As for the mass of ordinary people, if they should be seized
by a serious disease while in the army, they are carried out
while still alive and breathing. When a man is exposed like
this, he is supplied with a lump of bread, water, and a stick.
As long as he is able to taste the food, and while some strength
remains to him, he keeps off marauding animals with this
stick and scares off the feasters. But if, before he is completely
finished, the disease overcomes him to the extent that he can
no longer move his hands, then they devour the poor wretch
while he is still only half dead and only just beginning to
give up the ghost, cutting off his hopes of possible survival.
For there are many who have before now recovered their
strength and returned home. They are like actors on the stage
in a tragedy who have come from the "gates of darkness,"
feeble and cadaverous, fit to terrify those they meet. If a
man does return like this, everyone turns away from him and
avoids him as though he is accursed and still in the service of
the infernal powers. He is not allowed to resume his former
way of life until the pollution, as it were, of his expected death
has been exorcised by the Magi, and he can take in exchange,
so to speak, his renewal of life. It is very clear that each

μέν ὅτι δὴ τῶν ἀνθρωπείων ἔθνων ὡς ἕκαστοι, εἴ γε ὅτῳ δὴ οὖν νόμῳ ἐκ
 πλείστου νενικηκότι ἐμβιοτεύσαιεν, τοῦτον δὲ ἄριστον ἡγοῦνται καὶ
 35 θεσπέσιον, καὶ εἴ που τι παρ' ἐκείνων πράττειτο, φευκτόν τε αὐτοῖς εἶναι
 δοκεῖ καὶ καταγέλαστον καὶ ὁποῖον ἤδη καὶ ἀπιστεῖσθαι. ἐξεύρηνται δὲ
 ὁμῶς αἰτίαι τοῖς ἀνθρώποις καὶ λόγοι τῶν οἰκείων πέρι νομίμων ἄλλοθι
 ἄλλοι, τυχὸν μὲν ἀληθεῖς, τυχὸν δὲ καὶ ἐς τὸ πιθανώτερον ἐσκευασμένοι.
 9 καὶ οὐδὲν οἶμαι θαυμαστόν, εἰ καὶ Πέρσαι τὰ παρὰ σφίσιν αὐτοῖς ἔθῃ
 40 αἰτιολογοῦντες ἀμείνονα πειρῶνται τῶν ἐκασταχοῦ ἀποφαίνειν· ἐκείνο
 δὲ καὶ λίαν θαυμάσαιμι ἄν, ὅτι δὴ οἱ παλαιάτατοι τῆς χώρας οἰκήτορες,
 εἶεν δ' ἂν οὗτοι Ἀσσύριοι τε καὶ Χαλδαῖοι καὶ Μῆδοι, ἀλλ' ἐκείνοις γε οὐ
 ταῦτά ἐδόκει. 10 καὶ γὰρ ἀμφὶ Νῖνον τὴν πόλιν καὶ ἄνὰ τὴν Βαβυλω-
 νίαν χώραν καὶ πρὸς γε ἓν τῇ Μηδικῇ τύμβοι τε καὶ θῆκαι τῶν πάλαι
 45 τεθνεώτων ἴδρυντο, οὐκ ἄλλον τινὰ ἢ τὸν ἡμέτερον ἀποσώζουσαι τρό-
 116 B πον, καὶ εἴτε | σώματα εἴτε κόνις ἦν τὸ κρυπτόμενον, ὡς δὴ ἐκείνων κατὰ
 τὸν παρ' Ἑλλῆσι νόμον πυρποληθέντων, οὐδαμῶς ὁμοιά γε ταῦτα τοῖς
 νῦν γιγνομένοις ἐτύγχανον ὄντα.

24. Οὐκ οὖν ἐκεῖνοί γε ὥδε ἐγίγνωσκον οὔτε περὶ τὰς ταφάς, οὐ μὲν
 50 οὖν ἀλλ' οὐδὲ ἐς τὴν τῆς εὐνῆς παρανομίαν ὅποια οἱ νῦν ἀκολασταίνου-
 σιν, οὐ μόνον ἀδελφαῖς τε καὶ ἀδελφιδαῖς ἀνέδην μιγνύμενοι, ἀλλὰ πατέρες
 τε θυγατράσι καὶ τὸ δὴ πάντων ἀνοσιώτερον, ὧ νόμοι γε καὶ φύσις, υἱοὶ
 ταῖς τεκούσαις. ὅτι γὰρ αὐτοῖς καὶ τοῦτο κεκαινοτόμηται, ἐκείθεν ἂν τις
 σαφέστατα διαγνοίῃ. 2 λέγεται γὰρ ποτε Σεμίραμιν τὴν πάνυ τὴν
 55 Ἀσσυρίαν εἰς τοῦτο ἀκρασίας ἡγμένην, ὡς Νινύα τῷ παιδί ἐθελῆσαι
 ξυνελθεῖν ἐς ταῦτό καὶ ἤδη πειρᾶν τὸν νεανίαν. 3 τὸν δὲ ἀπανήνασθαι
 καὶ χαλεπῆναι καὶ τελευτῶντα, ἐπειδὴ αὐτὴν ἐώρα σφαδάζουσαν καὶ
 ἐγκειμένην, ἀποκτεῖναι τε τὴν μητέρα καὶ τόδε τὸ ἄγος ἄντ' ἐκείνου
 ἐλέσθαι. καίτοι εἰ νόμῳ ταῦτα ἐφείτο, οὐκ ἂν, οἶμαι, ὁ Νινύας ἐς τόδε
 60 ὠμότητος ἦει. 4 καὶ τί δεῖ τὰ λίαν παλαιάτατα λέγειν; ὀλίγῳ γὰρ ἔμ-
 προσθεν τῶν Μακεδονικῶν καὶ τῆς τῶν Περσῶν καταλύσεως Ἀρταξέρξης
 φασὶ τὸν Δαρείου Παρυσάτιδος τῆς μητρὸς παραπλήσια τῇ Σεμιράμιδι
 117 B παθούσης καὶ ξυγγενέσθαι οἱ ἱεμένης ἀποκτεῖναι μὲν αὐτὴν ἡκιστα,
 ἐκκλῖναι δὲ ὁμῶς ξὺν ὀργῇ | καὶ ἀποσείσασθαι, ὡς οὐχ ὅσιον ὄν τοῦτό
 65 γε οὐδὲ πάτριον οὐδὲ τῷ βίῳ ξυνειθισμένον. 5 Πέρσαις δὲ τοῖς νῦν τὰ
 μὲν πρότερα ἔθῃ σχεδόν τι ἅπαντα παρεῖται ἀμέλει καὶ ἀνατέτραπται,
 ἄλλοις δὲ τισι καὶ οἷον νενοθευμένοις χρῶνται νομίμοις, ἐκ τῶν Ζω-
 ροάστρου τοῦ Ὁραμάσδεως διδαγμάτων κατακτηθέντες. 6 οὗτος δὲ
 ὁ Ζωροάστρως ἦτοι Ζαράδης (διττὴ γὰρ ἐπ' αὐτῷ ἡ ἐπωνυμία) ὀπηνίκα
 70 μὲν ἤκμασε τὴν ἀρχὴν καὶ τοὺς νόμους ἔθετο, οὐκ ἔνεστι σαφῶς διαγνώ-

individual nation considers any practice to which it is accustomed by long usage to be admirable and hallowed, and if a transgression is committed against it, it seems dreadful and ridiculous and even incredible. Nonetheless, men have discovered various explanations and accounts of their own individual customs, sometimes true, sometimes actually designed with an eye to probability. I do not think it surprising if the Persians also try to show that their customs are superior to those anywhere else, when they are tracing the explanations for them. But this does surprise me—the most ancient inhabitants of the land (the Assyrians and Chaldaeans and Medes) did not hold the same views. For around Nineveh and Babylonia, and in Media too, tombs and graves were set up for the dead in ancient times, following our custom exactly. Whether corpses or ashes were buried there (in the latter case they would have been following the Greek practice of cremation), it was still quite different from contemporary practice.

Those early inhabitants of the place did not hold the beliefs held today, whether in the matter of funeral rites or in the lawless marriage custom. The Persians of today have an abominable practice—not only do they shamelessly sleep with their sisters and nieces, but even fathers with daughters, and worst of all, O law and nature! sons with their mothers. That this too is an innovation can be clearly seen from the following: it is said that the famous Semiramis, the Assyrian, was driven to such a pitch of wantonness as to desire intercourse with her son Ninyas, and actually approached the young man. He angrily refused, and finally, when he saw that she was excited and pressing him, he killed his mother, preferring this pollution to the other. Yet if this had been allowed by law, it seems to me that Ninyas would never have come to such violence. What need to cite examples from such ancient times? Not long before the Macedonians and the fall of the Persians, they say that Artaxerxes the son of Darius was in the same position, for his mother Parysatis had the same passion as Semiramis and wanted to sleep with him. He did not kill her, but he recoiled in anger and pushed her away, as though this was neither righteous nor customary nor natural in human life. But the Persians of today neglect and spurn nearly all their earlier practices, and have adopted new ways which might be described as bastard, seduced by the teachings of Zoroaster the son of Horomasdes. When this Zoroaster or Zarades (for he is called by two names) first flourished and made his laws is impossible to discover with

116.4 B

ναι. Πέρσαι δὲ αὐτὸν οἱ νῦν ἐπὶ Ὑστάσπεω, οὕτω δὴ τι ἀπλῶς, φασὶ
 γεγονέναι, ὡς λίαν ἀμφιγνοεῖσθαι καὶ οὐκ εἶναι μαθεῖν, πρότερον ὁ Δαρείου
 πατὴρ εἴτε καὶ ἄλλος οὗτος ὑπῆρχεν Ὑστάσπης. 7 ἐφ' ὅτῳ δ' ἂν
 καὶ ἦνθησε χρόνῳ, ὑφηγητῆς αὐτοῖς ἐκεῖνος καὶ καθηγεμὼν τῆς μαγικῆς
 75 γέγονεν ἀγιστείας, καὶ αὐτὰς δὴ τὰς προτέρας ἱερουργίας ἀμείψας
 παμμιγεῖς τινὰς καὶ ποικίλας ἐνέθηκε δόξας. 8 τὸ μὲν γὰρ παλαιὸν
 Δία τε καὶ Κρόνον καὶ τούτους δὴ ἅπαντας τοὺς παρ' Ἑλλήσι θρυλουμέ-
 νους ἐτίμων θεοὺς, πλήν γε ὅτι δὴ αὐτοῖς ἡ προσηγορία οὐχ ὁμοίως ἐσώ-
 ζετο, ἀλλὰ Βῆλον μὲν τὸν Δία τυχὸν Σάνδην τε τὸν Ἡρακλέα καὶ Ἀναί-
 80 τιδα τὴν Ἀφροδίτην καὶ ἄλλως τοὺς ἄλλους ἐκάλουν, ὥς που Βηρωσσῶ
 τε τῷ Βαβυλωνίῳ καὶ Ἀθηνοκλεῖ καὶ Σιμάκῳ, τοῖς τὰ ἀρχαιότατα τῶν
 118 B Ἀσσυρίων τε καὶ | Μήδων ἀναγραφαιμένοις, ἱστορήται. 9 νῦν δὲ ὡς
 τὰ πολλὰ τοῖς καλουμένοις Μανιχαίοις ξυμφέρονται, ἐς ὅσον δύο τὰς
 πρώτας ἡγείσθαι ἀρχὰς καὶ τὴν μὲν ἀγαθὴν τε ἅμα καὶ τὰ κάλλιστα
 85 τῶν ὄντων ἀποκυήσασαν, ἐναντίως δὲ κατ' ἄμφω ἔχουσιν τὴν ἐτέραν·
 ὀνόματά τε αὐταῖς ἐπάγουσι βαρβαρικά καὶ τῇ σφετέρᾳ γλώττῃ πεπονη-
 μένα. τὸν μὲν γὰρ ἀγαθὸν εἴτε θεὸν εἴτε δημιουργὸν Ὀρμισδάτην ἀπο-
 καλοῦσιν, Ἀριμάνης δὲ ὄνομα τῷ κακίστῳ καὶ ὀλεθρίῳ. 10 ἑορτὴν τε
 πασῶν μείζονα τὴν τῶν κακῶν λεγομένην ἀναίρεσιν ἐκτελοῦσιν, ἐν ἣ τῶν
 90 τε ἐρπετῶν πλεῖστα καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ζώων ὅπόσα ἄγρια καὶ ἐρημονόμα
 κατακτείνοντες τοῖς μάγοις προσάγουσιν ὥσπερ ἐς ἐπίδειξιν εὐσεβείας.
 ταύτη γὰρ οἶονται τῷ μὲν ἀγαθῷ κεχαρισμένα διαπονεῖσθαι, ἀνιᾶν δὲ
 καὶ λυμαίνεσθαι τὸν Ἀριμάνην. 11 γεραίρουσι δὲ ἐς τὰ μάλιστα τὸ
 ὕδωρ, ὡς μὴδὲ τὰ πρόσωπα αὐτῷ ἐναπονίζεσθαι μήτε ἄλλως ἐπιθιγγά-
 95 νειν, ὃ τι μὴ ποτοῦ τε ἑκατὶ καὶ τῆς τῶν φυτῶν ἐπιμελείας.

25. Πολλοὺς δὲ καὶ ἄλλους θεοὺς ὀνομάζουσι καὶ ἱλάσκονται [τοῦτο
 Ἑλληνικόν] θυσίαις τε χρῶνται καὶ ἀφαγνισμοῖς καὶ μαντείαις [καὶ τοῦτο
 Ἑλληνικόν]. τὸ δὲ πῦρ αὐτοῖς τίμιόν τε εἶναι δοκεῖ καὶ ἁγιάτατον· καὶ
 119 B 100 τοῖσιν ἐν οἰκίσκοις τισὶν ἱεροῖς τε δῆθεν καὶ ἀποκεκριμένοις ἄσβεστον οἱ
 μάγοι φυλάττουσι καὶ ἐς ἐκεῖνο ἀφορῶντες τὰς τε ἀπορρήτους τε|λετὰς
 ἐκτελοῦσι καὶ τῶν ἐσομένων πέραν ἀναπνυθάνονται. 2 τοῦτο δέ, οἶμαι,
 τὸ νόμιμον ἢ παρὰ Χαλδαίων ἢ ἐξ ἐτέρου του ἀνελέξαντο γένους· οὐ
 γὰρ δὴ τοῖς ἄλλοις ξυμβαίνει. ὥδέ πως ἄρα αὐτοῖς ἡ δόξα, ἐκ πλείστων
 ὄσων ἐθνῶν ἡρηνισμένη, ὡς ποικιλώτατα ζύγκειται. καὶ μοι τοῦτο οὐκ
 105 ἀπὸ τρόπου δοκεῖ γεγενῆσθαι. 3 ἄλλην γὰρ οὕτω πολιτείαν οὐκ
 οἶδα ἐς πλείστας μορφάς τε καὶ σχήματα μεταβαλοῦσαν καὶ ἐν ταύτῳ
 μένειν ἐπὶ πλείστον οὐ διαρκέσασαν, ἀλλὰ μυρίων ἐθνῶν ἄλλοτε ἄλλων
 ἐπικράτειαν δεξαμένην· τῷ τοι ἄρα καὶ εἰκότως πολλῶν ἰδεῶν τε καὶ

certainty. The Persians of today say that he was born in the time of Hystaspes, without further qualification, so that it is very obscure and impossible to tell whether this Hystaspes was the father of Darius or someone else. But at whatever time he flourished, he was their teacher and guide in the rites of the Magi; he replaced their original worship by complex and elaborate doctrines.

In ancient times they worshipped Zeus and Cronos and all the familiar gods acknowledged by pagans, except that they did not use the same names. They called Zeus Bel, say, and Heracles Sandes, and Aphrodite Anaitis, and the rest by other names, as is somewhere recorded by Berossus the Babylonian and Athenocles and Simacus, who wrote the ancient history of the Assyrians and Medes. But now they resemble in most respects the so-called Manichaeans, insofar as they hold that the first principles are two, one good, the source of all that is best in creation, the other the opposite in both respects. They give them barbarian names in their own language. The good spirit or creator they call Hormisdates, and Arimanes is the name of the bad, destructive one. Their greatest festival is that called the "Removal of Evil," when they kill large numbers of serpents and other wild and desert-living creatures and bring them to the Magi as though as a sign of piety. In this way they believe that they are doing what pleases the good spirit, while vexing and offending Arimanes. They honor water greatly, to the extent that they neither wash their faces in it nor touch it in any other way except for drinking and the nurture of crops.

They have names for and worship many other gods too. 118.17 B
They practice sacrifice and purification and divination. Fire they hold to be worthy of reverence and very holy, and for this reason the Magi keep it unquenched in certain holy buildings, set apart, and look toward it while performing their secret rites and inquiring about the future. This practice they derived I believe from the Chaldaeans or from some other people, for it does not accord with the rest. In this way it seems that their faith, to which so many different peoples have contributed, has become very complicated. This seems very understandable. I do not know of any other state which has assumed so many forms and shapes, not able to remain for long in the same form but suffering the domination of countless different peoples at different times. So it is very natural that it should preserve the signs of so many types and customs.

- νόμων γνωρίσματα σώζει. 4 πρῶτοι μὲν γὰρ ὧν ἀκοῇ ἴσμεν Ἀσσύριοι
 110 λέγονται ἅπασαν τὴν Ἀσίαν χειρώσασθαι πλὴν Ἰνδῶν τῶν ὑπὲρ
 Γάγγην ποταμὸν ἰδρυμένων. Νῖνός τε πρότερον φαίνεται καὶ βασιλείαν
 ἐνταῦθα βεβαίαν καταστησάμενος Σεμίραμις τε αὖ μετ' ἐκείνον καὶ ἐξῆς
 ἅπαντες οἱ τούτων ἀπόγονοι μέχρι καὶ ἐς Βελεοῦν τὸν Δερκετάδου.
 5 ἐς τοῦτον γὰρ δὴ τὸν Βελεοῦν τῆς τοῦ Σεμιραμείου φύλου διαδοχῆς
 115 παυσαμένης Βελητάραν τις ὄνομα, φυτουργὸς ἀνὴρ καὶ τῶν ἐν τοῖς
 120 Β βασιλείοις κήπων μελεδωνὸς καὶ ἐπιστάτης, ἔκαρ|πώσατο παραλόγως
 τὴν βασιλείαν καὶ τῷ οἰκίῳ ἐνεφύτευσε γένει, ὥς που Βίωνι γέγραπται
 καὶ Ἀλεξάνδρῳ τῷ Πολυῖστορι, ἕως ἐς Σαρδανάπαλλον, ὥς ἐκεῖνοί φασι,
 τῆς ἀρχῆς ἀπομαρανθείσης Ἀρβάκης ὁ Μῆδος καὶ Βέλεσος ὁ Βαβυλώνιος
 120 ἀφήρηνται αὐτὴν τοὺς Ἀσσυρίους, καθελόντες τὸν βασιλέα, καὶ ἐς τὸ
 Μηδικὸν μετέστησαν ἔθνος, ἐξ τε καὶ τριακοσίων ἡδὴ πρὸς τοῖς χιλίοις ἦ
 καὶ ὀλίγῳ πλείονων ἐτῶν παρωχηκότων, ἐξ οὗ τὰ πρῶτα ὁ Νῖνος τῶν
 ἐκείνη κατέσχε πραγμάτων. οὕτω γὰρ Κτησίφ τῷ Κινιδίῳ τοὺς χρόνους
 ἀναγραψαμένῳ καὶ Διόδωρος ξύμψησιν ὁ Σικελιώτης. 6 Μῆδοι τοῖνυν
 125 αὐθις ἐκράτουν, καὶ ἅπαντα τοῖς ἐκείνων ἐτάττετο νόμοις. ἔτη δὲ καὶ
 τούτων ἐν τῇ ἀρχῇ διανυσάντων οὐ μείον ἢ τριακόσια Κῦρος ὁ Καμβύσου
 τὸν Ἀστυάγην καταπολεμήσας ἐπὶ Πέρσας τὴν ἡγεμονίαν μετήγαγε.
 πῶς δὲ οὐκ ἤμελλεν, Πέρσης τε ὧν αὐτὸς ἰθαγενὴς καὶ ἅμα χαλεπαίνων
 τοῖς Μήδοις διὰ τὰς ξὺν Ἀστυάγει παρατάξεις; 7 κρατήσαντες δὲ καὶ
 130 οἱ Περσικοὶ βασιλεῖς ὀκτώ τε καὶ εἴκοσι καὶ διακόσια ἔτη, καὶ μέντοι καὶ
 ἡ τούτων ἀρχὴ τελεώτατα διερρῦη, στρατῷ ἐπηλύτῃ καὶ βασιλεῖ ἄλλο-
 τρίῳ καταλυθεῖσα. 8 Ἀλέξανδρος γὰρ ὁ Φιλίππου Δαρεῖον ἀποκτείνας
 τὸν Ἀρσάμου τὸν βασιλέα καὶ ἅπασαν τὴν Περσίδα παραστησάμενος
 121 Β ἐς Μακεδονικὴν τὰ πράγματα | μετέθηκε πολιτείαν. οὕτω γὰρ ἦν μεγα-
 135 λουργὸς ἐς τὰ μάλιστα καὶ ἀμαχώτατος, ὥς, ἐπειδὴ αὐτὸν καὶ ἀποβιῶναι
 ξυνέβη, ὅμως τοὺς ἐκείνου διαδόχους, Μακεδόνας γε ὄντας, κατασχεῖν ἐπὶ
 πλείστον τῆς ἁλλοδαπῆς καὶ ὀθνεῖας καὶ ἐπὶ μέγα δυνάμειος ἀφικέσθαι.
 καὶ οἶμαι ἄχρι καὶ ἐς τόδε τοῦ καιροῦ ἦρχον ὅν καὶ ἐπεκράτουν τῇ τοῦ
 οἰκιστοῦ κρατυνόμενοι δόξῃ, εἰ μὴ ἐς ἀλλήλους στασιάζαντες καὶ θαμὰ
 140 κατὰ τε σφῶν αὐτῶν καὶ πρὸς Ῥωμαίους παραταξάμενοι τοῦ πλείονος
 ἑκατὶ διέλυσαν τὰς οἰκείας δυνάμεις καὶ οὐκέτι ἀνάλωτοι τοῖς πέλας ἐδό-
 κουν. 9 τοιγάρτοι ἄρξαντες οὐ λίαν ἐλάττονα χρόνον τῶν Μήδων,
 ὅτι μὴ ἑπτὰ ἔτεσι δέοντα (πειστέον γὰρ κἀνταῦθα τῷ Πολυῖστορι), ἐς
 τοσοῦτον δὴ οὖν κρατήσαντες, Παρθυαῖοί γε αὐτούς, ἔθνος κατήκοον
 145 καὶ ἥκιστα ἐν τῷ πρὸ τοῦ ὀνομαστότατον, παρέλυσαν τῆς ἀρχῆς τοὺς
 Μακεδόνας. 10 καὶ εἴτα ἐκεῖνοι τῶν ὅλων πλὴν Αἰγύπτου ἡγοῦντο,
 Ἀρσάκου μὲν πρότερον τῆς ἀποστάσεως ἄρξαμένου, ὥς καὶ Ἀρσακίδας
 τοὺς μετ' αὐτὸν ὀνομάζεσθαι, Μιθριδάτου δὲ οὐ πολλῷ ὕστερον ἐς μέγα
 τι κλέος τὸ Παρθυαίων ὄνομα ἐξενεγκόντος.

First among those about whom we know, the Assyrians are said to have subdued all Asia except for the Indian peoples living beyond the River Ganges. Ninus was, it seems, the first to establish a settled kingdom hereabout, and after him Semiramis, and in turn all their descendants even as far as Beleus the son of Derketades. Semiramis' line ended at this Beleus, when a certain Beletaras, a gardener who was keeper and head of the palace gardens, unaccountably harvested the kingdom and planted it in his own family, as is recorded by Bion and Alexander Polyhistor. The dynasty died out, as they tell us, with Sardanapallus, when Arbaces the Mede and Belesys the Babylonian took the kingdom from the Assyrians after killing the king, and transferred it to the Median people, 1306 years having passed or perhaps a little more since Ninus first gained control of affairs there. These are the figures of Ctesias the Cnidian, and Diodorus the Sicilian agrees with him. So the Medes ruled in their turn and everything was organized according to their laws. When they had ruled for no less than three hundred years Cyrus the son of Cambyses made war on Astyages and transferred the power to the Persians. Naturally enough, for he was Persian himself by birth, and was angry with the Medes besides, because of their campaigns with Astyages. The Persian kings ruled for 228 years themselves, yet their power too collapsed utterly, put down by a foreign army and a strange king. For Alexander the son of Philip killed Darius the son of Arsames, the king, and gained control of all Persia, on which he turned it over to Macedonian rule. He was so exceptionally great and invincible that after his own death his heirs, who were Macedonians, nonetheless got control of a very large area of alien and foreign territory and became exceedingly powerful. I believe they would have ruled it and controlled it to this day, on the strength of the reputation of their founder, had they not quarrelled among themselves and constantly made war against each other and against Rome in greed for gain, and dissipated their own power and destroyed their appearance of invincibility. At any rate, they ruled for not much less time than the Medes, only seven years less (for here too we must follow Polyhistor), and after this length of time the Parthians, a subject people of no particular fame before this, displaced the Macedonians from their kingdom. After this they ruled the whole area except for Egypt. Arsaces began the revolt, so that his descendants were called Arsacids, and not long afterwards Mithridates brought the Parthian name to great glory.

122 B 150 26. Ἑβδομήκοντα δὲ ἐτῶν ἤδη ἐπὶ διακοσίοις παρῳχηκό|των ἀπὸ
 Ἀρσάκου τοῦ προτέρου ἐς Ἀρτάβανον τὸν ἔσχατον βασιλέα, ἡνίκα τὰ
 Ῥωμαίων πράγματα ὑπὸ Ἀλεξάνδρῳ τῷ Μαμαίᾳς παιδὶ ἐτετάχατο,
 κατ' ἐκεῖνο δὴ τοῦ καιροῦ τὸ Χοσρόου τοῦ καθ' ἡμᾶς βασιλεύειν ἤρξατο
 γένος ἢ τε μέχρι καὶ νῦν παρὰ Πέρσαις κατέχουσα πολιτεία ἐν τῷ τότε
 155 ἀρχὴν εἴληφε καὶ οἷον κατάστασιν πρώτην. 2 Ἀρταξάρης γάρ τις
 τοῦνομα, Πέρσης ἀνὴρ, ἄδοξος μὲν τὰ πρῶτα καὶ ἀφανέστατος, ἄλλως
 δὲ μεγαλουργὸς καὶ δραστήριος καὶ δεινὸς κινῆσαι τὰ καθεστῶτα,
 ξυνωμότας ἀγείρας καὶ ἐπιθέμενος Ἀρτάβανον μὲν ἀναιρεῖ τὸν βασιλέα,
 ἑαυτῷ δὲ περιθείς τὴν κίδαριν καὶ τὴν Παρθικὴν δύναμιν καταλύσας
 160 αὐθις τοῖς Πέρσαις τὴν σφετέραν ἀνενεώσατο βασιλείαν. 3 ἦν δὲ γε
 οὗτος τῇ μαγικῇ κάτοχος ἱεουργία καὶ αὐτουργὸς τῶν ἀπορρήτων.
 ταῦτά τοι καὶ τὸ μαγικὸν φύλον ἐγκρατὲς ἐξ ἐκείνου γέγονε καὶ ἀγέρωχον,
 ὃν μὲν ἤδη καὶ πρότερον καὶ ἐκ παλαιοῦ τήνδε τὴν ἐπὶ κλησιν ἀποσωζόν,
 οὕτω δὲ ἐξ τοῦτο τιμῆς τε καὶ παρρησίας ἡρμένον, ἄλλ' ὅποιον ὑπὸ τῶν
 165 ἐν τέλει ἔστιν ἢ καὶ περιορᾶσθαι. 4 δῆλον δέ· οὐ γὰρ ἂν οἱ ἀμφὶ Δαρεῖον
 Πέρσαι Σμέρδιος πάλαι τοῦ μάγου μετὰ Καμβύσῃν τὸν Κύρου τὴν βασι-
 λείαν ὑποσυλήσαντος συμφορὰν ἐποιοῦντο τὸ γεγεννημένον καὶ αὐτόν
 123 B τε τὸν Σμέρ|διν ἀπέκτειναν καὶ πολλοὺς τῶν ὅσοι ὁμογνώμονες ἐκείνῳ
 ἐτύγχανον ὄντες, ὥς οὐκ ἐξὸν τοῖς μάγοις τῷ βασιλείῳ θάκῳ ἐνωραΐζεσ-
 170 θαι καὶ ἰλάνειν. οὕτω δὲ αὐτοῖς οὐ μισροὶ ἔδοξαν εἶναι οἱ φόνοι, μᾶλλον
 μὲν οὖν καὶ μείζονος ἄξιοι μνήμης, ὥστε ἀμέλει τὴν στάσιν ἐκείνην Μαγο-
 φόνια ἑορτὴν ὀνομασθῆναι καὶ θυσίας ἐπιτελεῖσθαι χαριστηρίους. 5 νῦν
 δὲ τιμῶσιν αὐτοὺς ἅπαντες καὶ ὑπεράγανται, καὶ τὰ τε κοινὰ ταῖς
 τούτων βουλαῖς καὶ προαγορεύσει διατάττεται καὶ ἰδίᾳ ἐκάστῳ τῶν
 175 συμβαλλόντων ἢ δίκην λαγχάνοντι ἐφίστανται διασκοποῦντες, τὰ ποιού-
 μενα καὶ ἐπικρίνοντες, καὶ οὐδὲν ὁτιοῦν παρὰ Πέρσαις δόξειεν ἂν ἔννομόν
 τε εἶναι καὶ δίκαιον, ὃ γε μὴ ὑπὸ μάγου ἐμπεδωθῆι.

27. Λέγεται δὲ τὴν τοῦ Ἀρταξάρου μητέρα Παβέκῳ τινὶ ξυνωκηκέ-
 ναι, παντάπασι μὲν ἀσημοτάτῳ καὶ σκυτοτόμῳ τὴν τέχνην, τῆς δὲ τῶν
 180 ἀστέρων πορείας δαημονεστάτῳ καὶ οἷῳ ῥαδίως τὰ ἐσόμενα διασκοπεῖσ-
 θαι. 2 ἄνδρα δὲ στρατιώτην Σάσανον ὄνομα διὰ τῆς Καδουσαιῶν,
 οὕτω ξυνενεχθέν, πορευόμενον χώρας ἐπιξενωθῆναι τε τῷ Παβέκῳ καὶ
 ἐς τὸ ἐκείνου δωμάτιον καταχθῆναι. 3 τὸν δὲ ὄτῳ δὴ οὖν τρόπῳ, ἅτε,
 οἶμαι, μάντιν, ἐπιγνόντα ὥς ἢ τοῦ ξένου γονὴ ἀρίστη τε ἔσται καὶ
 124 B 185 ἀρίδην καὶ ἐπὶ μέγα εὐδαιμονίας χωρήσει, ἀλύειν μὲν καὶ | ὀλοφύρεσθαι,

Two-hundred and seventy years passed from Arsaces the first to Artabanus the last king, at the time when Rome was under the rule of Alexander the son of Mammaea; at that time the dynasty of Chosroes, of our own day, began, and the government which prevails among the Persians to this day took its beginning and, as it were, its foundation at that time. A certain Persian called Artaxares, at first obscure and undistinguished, but able and energetic all the same, and good at instigating disturbance, gathered together a band of fellow conspirators and made an attack, killing the King, Artabanus. He assumed the *kidaris* himself and by putting an end to Parthian rule he restored to the Persians their own kingdom. This man was bound by the rites of the Magi, and a practitioner of the secrets. So it was that the tribe of the Magi also grew powerful and lordly as a result of him. It had indeed existed before, and its name was very ancient, but it had never been so honored and enjoyed so much freedom. It had sometimes actually been spurned by those in power. This is clear, for otherwise, when in ancient times Smerdis the Magus seized the throne after Cambyses the son of Cyrus, the Persians around Darius would not have thought ill of it, nor would they have killed Smerdis himself and many of those who were of his party on the grounds that it was not lawful for Magi to give themselves airs and sit on the royal throne. But as it was, the murders did not seem to them to be wicked—on the contrary, they actually thought they deserved greater commemoration, for they made that uprising into a festival called “The Killing of the Magi,” with performances of thanksgiving sacrifices. Now they all honor them and admire them, and public affairs are conducted at their wish and instigation. In private affairs too they preside over and oversee the proceedings when anyone makes an agreement or conducts a suit, and nothing whatever is held to be lawful or right among the Persians unless it is ratified by a Magus.

121.19 B

It is said that Artaxares' mother was married to a certain Pabak, who was quite obscure, a leather worker by trade, but very learned in astrology and easily able to discern the future. It so happened that a soldier called Sasanus who was travelling through the land of the Cadusaei was given hospitality by Pabak and lodged in his house. The latter recognized somehow, in his capacity as a seer I presume, that the offspring of his guest would be splendid and famous and would reach great good fortune. He was disappointed and upset

123.13 B

190 ὅτι δὴ αὐτῷ οὔτε θυγάτηρ ὑπῆν οὔτε ἀδελφή, οὐ μὲν οὖν οὐδὲ ἄλλο τι
 γύναιον ὡς ἐγγύτατα ξυνημμένον. τέλος δὲ ξυγκατακλίνει οἱ τὴν γαμε-
 τήν καὶ τῆς εὐνῆς ἐπιχωρῆσαι, ὑπεριδόντα μάλα γενναίως τοῦ αἵσχους
 καὶ τῆς παραυτίκα λώβης τε καὶ ἀτιμίας τὴν μέλλουσαν τύχην ἀνταλ-
 200 λαξάμενον. 4 οὕτω τε φύντα τὸν Ἀρταξάρην τραφῆναι μὲν ὑπὸ τῷ
 Παβέκῳ, ἐπεὶ δὲ νεανίας γενόμενος καρτερώτατα τὴν βασιλείαν κατέσχευεν,
 ἔριν εὐθύς καὶ νεῖκος ἐξαίσιον ἀναφανδὸν Σασάνῳ τε καὶ Παβέκῳ ἀναρρα-
 γῆναι. ἑκάτερον γὰρ ἐθέλειν πρὸς αὐτοῦ τὸν παῖδα ἐπονομάζεσθαι.
 195 5 μόλις δὲ ἄμφω ξυμβῆναι, ἐφ' ᾧ δῆτα υἱὸν μὲν αὐτὸν Παβέκου καλεῖσ-
 θαι, ἐκ σπέρματος δὲ ὅμως Σασάνου τεχθέντα. οὕτω μὲν τὸν Ἀρταξάρην
 γενεαλογοῦντες οἱ Πέρσαι ἀληθῆ ταῦτά φασι καθεστάναι, ὡς καὶ ἐν ταῖς
 βασιλείοις διφθέραις ἀναγεγραμμένα. 6 ἐγὼ δὲ ἀπάντων τῶν ἐφεξῆς
 ἀπογόνων, ὅσοι δὴ τὴν ἀρχὴν διεδέξαντο, τά τε ὀνόματα ὀλίγῳ ὕστερον
 200 φράσω καὶ πρὸς γε ὅπόσον ἕκαστος ἐκράτησε χρόνον· καίτοι ἅπασι τοῖς
 μέχρι νῦν χρονογράφοις παρεῖται καὶ οὐ περὶ πλείστου γεγένηται τὰ
 τοιαῦτα διερευνήσασθαι. 7 ἀλλὰ τοὺς μὲν Ῥωμαίων βασιλεῖς ἀπὸ
 Ῥωμύλου τυχόν καὶ ἔτι πρότερον ἀπὸ Αἰνείου τοῦ Ἀγχίσου ἀρχόμενοι
 125 B 205 μέχρις Ἀναστασίου τε καὶ Ἰουστίνου τοῦ πρεσβύτου ἀπαριθμοῦνται,
 τοὺς δὲ παρὰ Πέρσαις (φημὶ δὲ τούτους ἐκείνους, ὅπόσοι δὴ μετὰ τὴν
 Παρθυαίων κατάλυσιν ἔτυχον βεβασιλευ|κότες) οὐκέτι ὁμοίως ἀντιτι-
 θέντες τοὺς χρόνους διευκρινήσαντο, δέον οὕτω ποιεῖν. 8 ἐμοὶ δὲ τὸ
 ἀκριβὲς καὶ τούτων πέρι ἀναλέλεκται ἐκ τῶν παρὰ σφίσιν ἐγγεγραμμέ-
 νων, καὶ οἶμαι τῇ παρουσίᾳ ξυγγραφῇ μάλα προσήκειν ἀπάντων ἐπι-
 210 μνηθῆναι. καὶ τοίνυν προῖων ἐπιμνήσομαι, ἥνίκα ἂν δεῖν οἴηθείην, εἰ καὶ
 ὀνομάτων πολλῶν καὶ τούτων βαρβαρικῶν οὕτω δὴ τι ψιλῶς καταλό-
 γους ποιεῖσθαι δεήσει, καὶ ταῦτα ἐνίων οὐδὲν ὃ τι ἀξιαφῆγητον εἰργασ-
 μένων. 9 τοσοῦτον δὲ μόνον πρὸς τὸ παρὸν εἴποιμι ἂν τοῦ σαφοῦς γε
 215 εἰκασι καὶ ἐς πλείστα χρησίμου, ὡς ἐννέα τε καὶ δέκα καὶ πρὸς γε τριακό-
 σιοι ἐνιαυτοὶ τελευτῶσιν ἐς τὸ πέμπτον τε καὶ εἰκοστὸν ἔτος τῆς Χοσρόου
 τούτου βασιλείας, καθ' ὃν δὴ χρόνον οἱ τε ἐν τῇ Κολχίδι χώρα πόλεμοι
 διεφέροντο καὶ τὸν Μερμερόην ἀποβιῶναι ξυνηνέχθη. διήνυστο δὲ ἄρα ἐν
 τῷ τότε Ἰουστινιανῷ βασιλεῖ ὀκτώ τε καὶ εἴκοσιν ἔτη Ῥωμαίων κρατοῦντι. |

that he had no daughter or sister or any other close female relative. But finally he yielded his own wife to him and gave up his marriage bed, nobly enduring the shame and preferring the future good fortune to the present disgrace and dishonor, And so Artaxares was born, and was reared by Pabak. But when he grew up and boldly seized the throne, a bitter quarrel and dispute immediately broke out between Sasanus and Pabak. Each of them wanted him to be called his son. Finally and with difficulty they agreed that he should be called the son of Pabak, though born from the seed of Sasanus. This is the genealogy of Artaxares given by the Persians, and they say it is true since it is actually recorded in the Royal Archives. In a later passage I will give the names of all his descendants in turn who inherited the throne and, in addition, how long each reigned. This has been neglected by all chronographers to date—they have not thought it important to inquire into it. Yet they count up the Roman kings from Romulus, say, and still further back, from Aeneas the son of Anchises as far as Anastasius and Justin the First. But as for the Persian kings (I mean by these, those who have reigned after the fall of the Parthians), they have not so far compared the chronology and inquired into them in the same way, even though this should have been done. I have read the truth about these too, however, in their own writings, and I think it very suitable to mention them all in this present history. As I proceed I shall mention them, therefore, when I think it appropriate, even though it will be necessary to make dry catalogues of many names, and barbarian ones at that, and, what is more, of some who did nothing worthy of note. I will say just this for the present for the sake of clarity and utility, that 319 years passed until the twenty-fifth year of the reign of Chosroes who is the subject of this. At that time the wars in Lazica were going on, and Mihr-Mihroe died. And at that time the twenty-eighth year of the reign of the Roman Emperor Justinian had come to an end.

COMMENTARY

78.1f. [*Persian exposure of the dead. Exposure of the sick. The Medes did not follow this practice. The examples of Semiramis and Parysatis show that consanguineous marriage too is an innovation.*]

78.2f.: ἐκτός που τοῦ ἄστεος . . .

The whole excursus is hung upon Agathias' description of the disposal of the body of Mihr-Mihroe, the Persian general in Lazica, in A.D. 555. For modern Zoroastrian funerary practice, see J. J. Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees* (Bombay, 1922), 51 ff.

78.6: γυμνὰ δὴ τὰ ὀσῶ . . .

It is still the custom to strip the body in the *dakhma* (the "tower of silence" of modern Parsism in which corpses are exposed, though cf. Duchesne-Guillemin, *La religion*, 106). Agathias' words are not, as suggested by G. Franke, *Questiones Agathianae* (Breslau, 1914), 10, an imitation of Herodotus, I.140—see my article in *BZ*, 57 (1964), 34. Though both Agathias and Herodotus mention dogs as well as vultures, as against Strabo (p. 735), this is no more than coincidence of detail. Agathias makes it clear that exposure is now the universal practice, and is unlikely to be drawing on Herodotus, who makes a sharp distinction between the popular customs and those of the Magi, to whom alone he attributes exposure. For the origin of the custom, see E. Benveniste, *Les mages dans l'ancien Iran*, Société des études iraniennes, 15 (Paris, 1938), 24.

78.7: θήκη γάρ τι . . .

Further confirmation of Agathias' independence of Herodotus and of Strabo too (who here follows Herodotus—*loc. cit.*). Herodotus claims that the "Persians," as distinct from the Magi, *did* bury their dead, after covering them with wax. The whole tendency of Herodotus' account is to separate the Magi from the "Persians." Agathias was probably drawing on extra information derived from Sergius in addition to his extract from the Annals (so J. Suolahti, "On the Persian Sources Used by the Byzantine Historian Agathias," *Studia Orientalia*, 13 [1947]). For further remarks on burial customs, see p. 80.43f.

This is in any case only an outline account of Persian burial customs, without any indication of why earth burial was not allowed (to avoid polluting the earth). Agathias prefers to explain the practice of exposure in moralising terms—cf. II.31, Keydell, 81.22f., where he reports the conventional Byzantine reaction to it and gives the explanation for it in the form of two hexameters supposedly spoken by a dream figure to one

of the Athenian philosophers in Persia who were rash enough to bury a corpse they found exposed. Mother Earth, the figure says, rejects any attempt to pollute her by burying men whose practice it is to commit incest with their mothers (cf. on p. 80.49f.). Despite Agathias' professed moderation (p. 80.39f.), his real attitude of disapproval for Persian religion and customs comes out clearly in his reactions to next-of-kin marriage and to the exposure of the dead.

78.8f.: ἐφ' ὅτῳ δὲ ἄν σώματι . . .

This sounds very much like a story Agathias had heard from Sergius.

78.16f.: Exposure of the *sick*

Is this a mistake? (So Clemen, *Nachrichten*, 199.) It was an old Bactrian custom (Cic., *Tusc.*, I.45, Strabo, p. 513f., Euseb., *Praep. Ev.*, I.4.7); perhaps, as Clemen suggests, it survived in some remote areas and Agathias has wrongly attributed it to the whole of Persia.

78.30f.: οὐ πρότερόν . . . , πρὶν ὑπὸ τῶν μάγων ἀποκαθαρθεῖν . . .

Clemen, *Nachrichten*, 200. Cf. Modi, *The Religious Ceremonies and Customs of the Parsees*, 51ff., for the very strict rules laid down in Parsi liturgy for the purification of any clothes which have come into contact with a dead person. The dead man's own clothes are always to be thrown away.

80.39: οὐδὲν οἶμαι θαυμαστόν . . .

This relatively broad-minded attitude (for a Byzantine) partly explains Agathias' unusual interest in foreign customs as shown here and in the excursus on the Franks. But it did not keep him from a deep-seated hostility to the Persians as such (see *infra*, on Agathias' attitude to Chosroes).

80.44f.: τύμβοι τε καὶ θῆκαι . . .

It is highly unlikely that this represents *personal* knowledge by Agathias—if it was, and if he had been to Persia, he would hardly have needed to use Sergius as an intermediary. But it is an example of an intelligent reference to archaeological evidence (cf. p. 80.53f. for another example of Agathias using his material critically, if not very efficiently). His speculation here is however vitiated by his extremely sketchy idea of the relation of Assyrians, Achaemenids, and Sassanians—see *infra*, on pp. 80.49f., 80.53f., 82.76f. Here he assumes that the tombs predate the Persians simply because he projected back the situation prevailing in his own time, when exposure was the general practice, to cover the whole Persian period. This is therefore mere guesswork by Agathias. Further on Agathias' ideas of pre-Sassanian religion, *infra*. Cf. Clemen, *Nachrichten*, 116–17, for Achaemenid tombs; he takes Herod., I.140, as referring solely to the Magi, but see my note on p. 78.7.

80.49f.: οὐκ οὖν ἐκεῖνοί γε ὥδε ἐγίγνωσκον . . .

ἐκεῖνοί seems to refer to the Assyrians (p. 80.42). But as proof of the changes that have taken place in *Persian* religion with the coming of Zoroaster (p. 80.65f.), to whom he seems to attribute the whole of the Sassanian system, including exposure and consanguineous marriage, Agathias takes an example from the Achaemenids (Parysatis, p. 80.60f.). Yet, when he comes to speak of pre-Zoroastrian Iranian religion (p. 82.76f.), it is again the Assyrian system that he claims to be describing. Clearly Agathias knew nothing of Persian religion beyond what Sergius told him, and beyond some very garbled half-knowledge about early times.

80.50f.: τὴν τῆς εὐνῆς παρανομίαν . . .

Khvēdhvaghdas (consanguineous marriage)—one of the fundamentals of Zoroastrianism (e.g., *Dādistān*, West, 77.6, 78.19, etc.), though disowned by modern Parsees (cf. J. A. Moulton, *Early Zoroastrianism* [London, 1913], 205). Agathias refers to it obliquely, as though it would be perfectly familiar to his audience. This is hardly surprising, as the Greek and Latin writers, for natural reasons, seized upon it with righteous indignation as a typical feature of Persian religion. Cf. Xanthus, *ap. Clem. Alex., Strom.*, III.11.1, ed. Stählin (our earliest evidence, if it can be trusted); Ctesias, *ap. Tert., Apol.*, 9, *Ad nat.*, I.16.5; Catullus, 90.1; Curtius Rufus, VIII.2.8, 19; Origen, *Contra Cels.*, VI.80. Theodoret affords a curious parallel to Agathias (*Graec. aff. cur.*, 9 [PG, 83, col. 1045 B]): κατὰ τοὺς Ζαράδου πάλαϊ Πέρσαι πολιτευόμενοι νόμους, καὶ μητράσι καὶ ἀδελφαῖς ἀδεῶς καὶ μέντοι καὶ θυγατράσι μιγνύμενοι, καὶ ἔννομον τὴν παρανομίαν νομίζοντες. . . .

80.53f.: καὶ τοῦτο κεκαινοτόμηται . . .

This is a place where Agathias is interpreting his material from his own reflections; see *infra*, on p. 86.162f. He takes Semiramis and Parysatis as *exempla*, from which he concludes that next-of-kin marriage is a Sassanian innovation. We should not then treat the phrase τοῦτο κεκαινοτόμηται as a genuine piece of evidence, but simply as an inference; see *supra*, on p. 80.44f. Insofar as Agathias is including the Achaemenid period with the example of Parysatis, his conclusion is incorrect: there are several examples of Khvēdhvaghdas from Achaemenid times (Christensen, *L'Iran*², 323f.). Cf. the story of Cambyses in Herodotus (III.31). It is interesting to find that Agathias' conclusion from the cases of Semiramis and Parysatis is the opposite of that drawn by some of his contemporaries, to whom they were the *prototypes* of Persian incest (see my article in *BZ*, 57 [1964], 39, note 25). The part of his inference which rests on the case of Parysatis is in fact mistaken, for it rests on a false premise; the incest motif only entered the stories of Parysatis at a late stage.

Both *exempla* go back, ultimately, to Ctesias (*FGrHist*, 688, F 14 and F 16), though in neither case does Ctesias have the incest motif itself. For Semiramis, cf. Pompeius Trogus (Justin, *Epit. Hist.*, I.2.8); Proc., *Anecd.*,

I.9: τὸν Σεμιράμιδος ἀκόλαστον βίον; and Ps.-Mos. Chor., I.15 (Langlois, II, 67f.), calling her "l'impudique et voluptueuse," in the midst of a very Ctesian passage. When Agathias mentions Semiramis again (p. 84.112f.) his account is purely Ctesian (see note on p. 84.109f.). As for Parysatis, the incest motif is absent in, e.g., Xen., *Anab.*, I.1.3, Plut., *Artax.*, 2f., Polyaeus, VII.16.1; but it would at any stage have been a natural development from Ctesias' account of her scheming (*FGrHist*, 688, F 16). Pp. 80.49–82.71 is then more Agathian speculation, based on non-Oriental sources. It is interesting that those sources are Ctesian.

80.54f.: Σεμίραμιν τὴν πάνυ . . .

C. F. Lehmann-Haupt, *Die historische Semiramis und ihre Zeit* (Tübingen, 1910), and in W. H. Roscher, *Lexicon*, s.v., *Klio*, 1 (1901), 256ff., 3 (1903), 135ff., 8 (1908), 227ff., 10 (1910), 476ff. It is important to notice that Agathias' version falls into the class of Semiramis legends which Berossus condemns (*ap.* Jos., *Contra Ap.*, I.142), though at p. 82.76f. Agathias cites Berossus himself and at p. 84.118 boasts of following Alexander Polyhistor, whose main source for the *Χαλδαϊκά* was Berossus. See *infra*, on pp. 82.80f., 84.112f.

80.65f. [*The changes date from Zoroaster, who introduced dualism. Persian fire-worship.*]

80.65f.: Πέρσαις δὲ τοῖς νῦν . . .

Agathias on Zoroaster. The passage from here to p. 80.103 appears (with commentary) in Bidez and Cumont, *Les mages*, II, 83ff. Agathias seems to think that all the distinctive features of Sassanian religion originated with Zoroaster, whom he places *after* the Achaemenid period, to judge from his example of Parysatis. It is an account more interesting for what it leaves out than for what it includes. Cf. A. D. Nock, "The Problem of Zoroaster," *American Journal of Archaeology*, 53 (1949), 280, "the late conventional picture of Zoroaster's work."

80.67f.: Ζωροάστρου τοῦ Ὁραμάσδεως . . .

Cf. Ps.-Pl., *Alc.*, I.122a: Ζωροάστρου τοῦ Ὠρομάλου

80.69: Ζωροάστρως ἦτοι Ζαράδης . . .

Agathias takes the two names as referring to the same person, rather than to two different people, as they do in Clem. Alex., *Strom.*, I.15.70, ed. Stählin, Pliny, *NH*, XXX.3ff., Plut., *De anim. procr. in Tim.*, I.37. With Agathias compare Theodore of Mopsuestia, *ap.* Phot., *Bibl.*, cod. 81, and an inscription from Cyrene quoted in L. Gray, "Additional Classical Passages mentioning Zoroaster's Name," *Le Muséon*, 9 (1908), 313.

What Agathias says is entirely independent of classical sources—see below on p. 82.71f.

82.71: Πέρσαι δὲ αὐτὸν . . . ἐπὶ Ὑστάσπεω . . .

Only one other source makes an explicit identification between the Vishtāspa with whom Zoroaster was connected and Hystaspes the father of Darius—Ammianus Marcellinus, XXIII.6.32. It is merely suggested by Eutychius when he makes Zoroaster a contemporary of Cambyses and Smerdis (*Annales*, ed. Pococke [Oxford, 1658], I, 262–63; see Jackson, *Zoroaster*, 167). The fact that, apart from this, the Persian and Arabic chroniclers show no signs of identifying the two, might well suggest that Agathias is here simply drawing his own conclusions from the name. Indeed, he says as much himself when he remarks that Persians of his own day simply say that Zoroaster belonged to the time of “Hystaspes,” οὕτω δὲ τι ἀπλῶς (p. 82.71). This is therefore another example of Agathias’ own speculation and should not be used as evidence. He knew of Hystaspes the father of Darius (cf. I.2, Keydell, 11.7) and quite naturally made the connection himself. Despite the silence of nearly all the sources, the identification has won vigorous support in modern times, notably from E. Herzfeld, *Zoroaster and his World* (Princeton, 1947). See however the convincing refutation by W. B. Henning, *Zoroaster, Politician or Witch-doctor?* (Oxford, 1951). For a summary of the very widely differing views held about Zoroaster by modern scholars, see Duchesne-Guillemin, *La religion*, 135 ff.

Agathias’ source evidently said nothing about the traditional date for Zoroaster in Persian reckoning (258 years before Alexander), for support of which see Henning, *op. cit.* This is not surprising. In the first place, it is probably not a Sassanian date but a later calculation (Duchesne-Guillemin, *La religion*, 136). And secondly, even if it had been available to Sergius, this is just the sort of detail which he might have omitted. On the other hand, Agathias is equally ignorant of the ubiquitous classical tradition putting Zoroaster six thousand years before Plato, and of the equally common synchronization between Zoroaster and Semiramis (cf. A. V. W. Jackson, “On the Date of Zoroaster,” *JAOS*, 17 [1896], 4f.; *idem*, *Zoroaster*, App. II). In view of Agathias’ use of the Ctesian *exemplum*, Semiramis, this is noteworthy, especially as he draws heavily on the Ctesian tradition for his Assyrian dating in the chronographical section (*infra*, on II.25, p. 84. 109 ff.). Eusebius, among the “Ctesian” authors, connects Zoroaster and Ninus (*Chron.*/Jerome, Helm, 20a), and much of Agathias’ chronographical material of course goes back to Eusebius: evidently Agathias acquired it only at second hand (see *infra*). Agathias’ treatment of Zoroaster in fact demonstrates his independence of earlier Western accounts of Persian religion. His source is contemporary; where he adds to it or emends it he is not drawing on Greek versions of Persian religion, but merely on his own general knowledge and native wit.

82.74f.: τῆς μαγικῆς . . . ἀγιστείας . . .

Not “magic” but simply “of the Magi.” Agathias does not share the classical tradition of attributing to the Magi any and every kind of sorcery

—cf. Paus., V.27.3; Lucian, *Nec.*, 6; Ps.-Clem., *Rec.*, IV.27–9; Cyrill. Alex., *Contra Jul.*, III (PG, 76, col. 633); Joh. Chrys., *De S. Bab.*, 2 (PG, 50, col. 536); Aug., *Civ. Dei*, XXI.14; etc. (An interesting passage differentiating between μάγεια and γοήτεια is Ps-Eudocia, *Viol.*, 633.) See Bidez and Cumont, *Les Mages*, I, 143f. John Chrysostom links Zoroaster and Zalmoxis as the founders of sorcery, asking at the same time why so few people know about them, even by name. Agathias did not know of the common (Christian) linking of Zoroaster and Zalmoxis (cf. my article in *BZ*, 57 [1964], 52)—a further indication that most of what he says about Persian religion is, thanks to his ignorance, remarkably free from contamination from Greek ideas of Zoroastrianism. If what Chrysostom says was true, Agathias may well have thought he was filling a gap.

For the writers who really knew about Persia, the Magi were never more than *priests*—cf. Diog. Laert., I.6.8 (referring to Aristotle and Dinon); Ps.-Pl., *Alc.*, I.122, and especially Dio Chrys., *Borysthen. Or.*, 36.41 (ed. Dindorf, II, 60): τοῖς ... τοῦ θεοῦ ξυνιέναι δυναμένοις, οὓς Πέρσαι μάγους ἐκάλεσαν, ἐπισταμένους θεραπεύειν τὸ δαιμόνιον, οὐχ ὥς Ἕλληνες ἀγνοίᾳ τοῦ ὀνόματος οὕτως ὀνομάζουσιν ἀνθρώπους γόητας. ... See further Benveniste, *Les Mages dans l'ancien Iran*, 25f. In Socrates, *HE*, VII.8.5f., Sozomen, *HE*, II.9.1f. and Procopius, *BP*, I.3.19f., the Magi stand simply as representatives of the Persian religion as a whole. So too Menander Protector, fr. 11 (*FHG*, IV, 213), where they stand for all Mazda-worshippers (K. Güterbock, *Byzanz und Persien in ihren diplomatisch-völkerrechtlichen Beziehungen im Zeitalter Justinians* [Berlin, 1906], 96, note). Cf. Moulton, *Early Zoroastrianism*, 208, Bidez and Cumont, *op. cit.*, I, 144, note 2. For Agathias as for Procopius and Menander the Magi are simply priests, and as such represent the Sassanian religion as a whole.

For Agathias' views on the date of the rise of the Magi to importance in the state, see further on p. 86.162.

82.76f.: τὸ μὲν γὰρ παλαιόν ...

What does Agathias mean by τὸ παλαιόν? From what has gone before, it would seem as if he means this to refer to the Achaemenids; but his authorities are for the "Assyrians and Medes" (p. 82.82). *Ibid.* (82.79): Βῆλον μὲν τὸν Δία τυχόν ...

Agathias' gods are Semitic at least in name; cf. K. O. Müller, "Sandon und Sardanapal," *Rheinisches Museum*, 3 (1829), 22ff., Bidez and Cumont, *Les mages*, I, 35; II, 85.

Βῆλον: for the frequent assimilation of Bel-Zeus-Ahuramazda, cf. F. Cumont, *Les religions orientales dans le paganisme romain*, 4th ed. (Paris, 1929), 136f. See Pliny, *NH*, VI.6; Euseb., *Chron. Arm.*, Karst, 8f.: "Belos, der auf griechisch Dios übersetzt wird [und auf armenisch Aramazd]" (Eusebius is here reporting Berossus, via Polyhistor). Cf. also the inscription of Arabissos in which Bel is envisaged as marrying the Mazdean religion (J.-B. Chabot, *Répertoire d'épigraphie sémitique*, III [Paris, 1918],

no. 1785, p. 188), and that of Antiochus I of Commagene (C. Michel, *Recueil d'inscriptions grecques* [Brussels, 1900], no. 135, line 43: Διὸς Ὠρομάσδου θρόνους [see Cumont, *op. cit.*, 137]). There is unlikely to be any conscious assimilation of this kind on Agathias' part.

Σάνδην: Sandes, the Cilician Heracles. See E. Meyer, "Über einige semitische Götter," *ZDMG*, 31 (1877), 736ff.; R. Dostálová, in *Klio*, 49 (1967), 39. It is not likely that O. Höfer (Roscher, *Lexicon*, s.v.) was right to postulate a *Mazdean* Sandes. Cf. Ammianus, XIV.8.3, and Steph. Byz., s.v. Ἀδανα. It is tempting to see a connection between Agathias and Nonnus, *Dionys.*, XXXIV.191 f.: ὁθεν Κιλικίων ἐνὶ γαίῃ | Σάνδης Ἡρακλῆς κικλήσκειται εἰσέτι (and cf. also Joh. Lyd., *De mag.*, III.64: Σάνδων Ἡρακλῆς), but it is far more likely that Agathias took over this set of identifications *en bloc*.

Ἀναΐτιδα: with the Semitic Bel and Sandes Agathias puts the Iranian Anāhitā, more commonly identified with Artemis (Diod., V.77; Plut., *Artax.*, 27; Paus., III.16.8, etc.). For Aphrodite-Anāhitā, see Herod., I.131 (who puts Mithra, though Anāhitā is clearly meant); Berossus, *ap. Clem. Alex., Protrept.*, V.65.2; Strabo, p. 732. Fr. Windischmann, *Die persische Anahita oder Anaitis* (Munich, 1856), 16, takes Agathias as simply reporting Berossus. So too Wikander, *Feuerpriester*, 61, note 2, on the grounds of the identification with Aphrodite. But, for the syncretism of Iranian and Greek deities as affecting Anāhitā, see M.-L. Chaumont, "Le culte de la déesse Anāhitā (Anahit) dans la religion des monarques d'Iran et d'Arménie au I^{er} siècle de notre ère," *JA*, 253 (1965), 170. It is very likely that Agathias' statement does indeed come ultimately from Berossus (cf. on Belus), but we can hardly assume that Agathias was using him direct.

The source of this odd collection of deities is not clear, despite Agathias' citation. Of the three authorities whom he names, two are otherwise unknown. We learn from Berossus that the erection of statues to Anāhitā was an innovation in the late Achaemenid period (*FGrHist*, 680, F 11 = Clem. Alex., *Protrept.*, loc. cit.; cf. R. G. Kent, *Old Persian: Grammar, Texts, Lexicon*, 2nd rev. ed. [New Haven, 1953], 154, inscr. of Artaxerxes Mnemon). But there is confusion in Agathias' collection, and we have no way of knowing at what stage the confusion came in.

This passage shows that Agathias *only* knew of Sassanian religion in the outline form he gives on p. 82.82f. Otherwise he could hardly have failed to recognize in his "old" deity one of the leading figures in the Sassanian pantheon. For Anāhitā in general, see Wikander, *op. cit.*, also M.-L. Chaumont, "Le culte d'Anāhitā à Staxr et les premiers Sassanides," *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, 153, fasc. 2 (1958). The passage confirms also that Agathias was not using Herodotus, or he would surely have noticed the discrepancy between Herodotus' account of the Persian gods and his own (Herod., I.131). Nor, significantly, does he seem to have any familiarity with the Greek works, including Diodorus, in which Anāhitā was identified with Artemis.

82.80f.: Βηρωσσῶ τε . . . καὶ Ἀθηνοκλεῖ καὶ Σιμάκῳ . . .

Athenocles and Simacus are quite unknown from other sources. E. Schwartz (*RE*, 2, s.v. "Athenokles [4]"), while calling Agathias a poor witness, tends to identify Athenocles with the Athenaeus cited by Diodorus (II.20.3) for a story told by Dinon (Aelian, *Varia Hist.*, VII.1). According to N. Iorga, "Médaillons d'histoire byzantine," *Byzantion*, 2 (1925), 242, and Suolahti, in *Studia Orientalia*, 13 (1947), 8, this passage shows Agathias' learning. See, however, on p. 82.76f., and, *infra*, p. 103f. P. 82.73–82 appears as Berossus, *FGrHist*, 680, F 12.

NOTE: Agathias' Idea of the Historical Placing of Zoroaster's Reforms

Like other Greek writers on the subject Agathias knows that Zoroaster was the great innovator in Persian religion; cf. Xanthus, *ap. Diog. Laert.*, I.2, para 2: μετ' αὐτὸν γεγονέναι πολλοὺς τινὰς Μάγους κατὰ διαδοχὴν; Plut., *De Iside*, 46; Theodoret, *Graec. aff. cur.*, 9 (PG, 28, col. 1045). But he does not really know what it was that Zoroaster changed, for his ideas on what Persian religion was like before Zoroaster are extremely confused, and he cannot distinguish between the Assyrians and the Persians—when he comes to deal with Persian history (p. 84. 109f.) he starts in conventional fashion with the *Assyrians*. Nor does he know exactly which features of Sassanian religion as it existed in his own day originated with Zoroaster; he tends instead, as was natural, to attribute to him *all* the characteristic elements. In this he may be compared with the Arabic writers who viewed Iranian religion, like Agathias, from the outside, and knew Zoroaster simply as the founder of the "Magian religion"—cf. R. Gottheil, "References to Zoroaster in Syriac and Arabic Literature," *Classical Studies in Honour of Henry Drisler* (New York, 1894), 33f. For the originality of Zoroaster, see in particular J. Duchesne-Guillemin, *Zoroastre* (Paris, 1948), 137f.

82.83: τοῖς καλουμένοις Μανιχαίοις συμφέρονται . . .

According to a ninth-century text, converts from Manichaeism to Christian orthodoxy were required to anathematize Zarades—Jackson, *Zoroaster*, 253. This is another of Agathias' additions, and it does not amount to much. It is clear from his section on the Sassanians that Agathias knew little or nothing about Mānī himself (see *infra*, in *Note*, p. 142), and we cannot deduce from the present passage that he knew much about Manichaeans, save in general terms.

82.83f.: δύο τὰς πρώτας . . . ἀρχάς . . .

Our first Greek reference to Persian dualism comes from Aristotle (*ap. Diog. Laert.*, I, pref. 8): καὶ δύο κατ' αὐτοὺς εἶναι ἀρχάς, ἀγαθὸν δαίμονα καὶ κακὸν δαίμονα, καὶ τῷ μὲν ὄνομα εἶναι Ζεὺς καὶ Ὡρομάσδης, τῷ δὲ Ἀίδης καὶ Ἀρειμάνιος. Cf. esp. Plut., *De Iside*, 46: νομίζουσι γὰρ οἱ μὲν θεοὺς εἶναι δύο . . . τὸν μὲν ἀγαθῶν,

τὸν δὲ φαύλων δημιουργόν. Zoroaster called τὸν μὲν ὤρομάλην, τὸν δ' Ἀρειμάνιον. Agathias' brief notice is completely in the spirit of the Pahlavī books—i.e., orthodox dualism as against Zurvanism, according to which Zurvan (= χρόνος, time) was the parent of the two principles. Christensen, *L'Iran*², 150f., would have it that Zurvanism was the ordinary form of Zoroastrianism in the Sassanian period. But, except for the *Dēnkard*, the Pahlavī books know nothing of it; nor does the inscription of Kartēr on the Ka'ba of Zoroaster, which boasts of the establishment of Mazdeism as the state religion. Some texts do indeed indicate a lack of unity in Sassanian belief (cf. Christensen, *loc. cit.*, and *Etudes sur le zoroastrisme de la Perse antique*, Kgl. Danske Videnskabernes Selskab, Hist.-filol. Meddelelser, XV, 2 [Copenhagen, 1928], 48f.; R. C. Zaehner, "Zurvanica I-III," *BSOS*, 9 [1937-39], 303ff., 573ff., 871ff.; J. Duchesne-Guillemin, "Notes on Zervanism in the Light of Zaehner's *Zurvan*, with Additional References," *JNES*, 15 [1956], 108f.), and it has been suggested that there were alternating phases of Zurvanism and orthodox dualism (R. C. Zaehner, *Zurvan, a Zoroastrian Dilemma* [Oxford, 1955]). It has been argued, however, that Zurvan was never more than an intellectual tendency, which did not reach the masses (so R. N. Frye, "Zurvanism again," *HThR*, 52 [1959], 63f.). If so, even if it survived in Chosroes' day in intellectual circles, Sergius very probably never heard of it. Agathias' version does not, of course, prove that Zurvanism no longer existed, but it does surely reflect the popular outline of dualism which an outside inquirer was likely to hear. We have in Damascius' *Dubitaciones et Solutiones* (chap. 125 bis) an account of Sassanian religion by another who had firsthand experience of the court of Chosroes, and it is a Zurvanite account. It has therefore been seen as reflecting his own experiences (so O. von Wesendonk, *Das Wesen der Lehre Zarathushtras* [Leipzig, 1927], 14); but since Damascius ascribes it explicitly to Eudemus of Rhodes, and we have no reason to disbelieve him, Damascius cannot be used to refute Agathias. Further—Zaehner, *Zurvan*, 49.

82.87: Ὀρμισδάτην . . .

A unique form. Cf. Plut., *De Iside*, quoted *supra*.

82.88: Ἀριμάνης . . .

Cf. I.7, Keydell, 18.27f.: τὸν παρὰ Πέρσαις καλούμενον Ἀρειμάνην, and see B. Rubin, "Der Fürst der Dämonen," *BZ*, 44 (1951), 473.

82.88f.: ἑορτήν τε πασῶν μέλζονα . . .

Not an imitation of Herod., I.140, even if Agathias is in fact describing the same festival. See my article in *BZ*, 57 [1964], 37; Bidez and Cumont, *Les mages*, II, 85; Christensen, *L'Iran*², 177. It was regarded as a religious duty to kill noxious animals, which belonged to Ahriman—cf., e.g., *Vendidad*, XIV.5 (SBE, 4 [Oxford, 1880], 166); *Dīnā-ī Maīnōg-ī Khirad*, V.8 (West, 28), etc., and cf. Plut., *De Iside*, 46: καὶ τῶν ζῶων ὥσπερ κύνας καὶ ὄρνιθας

καὶ χερσαίους ἐχίνους τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ· τοῦ δὲ φαύλου τοὺς ἐνύδρους μῦς εἶναι· διὸ καὶ τὸν κτείναντα πλείστους εὐδαιμονίζουσιν, and *Quaest. Conviv.*, IV.5.2.

82.93f.: γεραίρουσι δὲ ἐς τὰ μάλιστα τὸ ὕδωρ

Compare Herod., I.138, and Strabo, p. 732. But borrowing is unlikely; the sanctity of water was a commonplace theme (cf. Pliny, *NH*, XXX.6.17, and also *Vasishtā*, VI.11, SBE, 14 [Oxford, 1882], 36). See my article in *BZ*, 57 [1964], 37f. This was one of the most widely known features of Persian religion; thus Diog. Laert., I.6, advances the case of Xerxes flogging the sea as an example of Herodotus' "lies" on the grounds that he could not have polluted an element in this way (see Moulton, *Early Zoroastrianism*, 216f., 418; Clemen, *Nachrichten*, 54f.). Compare the epigram representing the words of a dead Persian (*Anth. Pal.*, VII.162), ending:

ἀλλὰ περιστείλας με δίδου χθονί· μηδ' ἐπὶ νεκρῷ
λουτρὰ χέης· σέβομαι, δέσποτα, καὶ ποταμούς.

Tacitus tells the story of Tiridates of Armenia refusing to go by sea to receive his crown from Nero because *sacerdotii religione attineretur* (*Ann.*, XV.24).

82.96f.: Πολλοὺς δὲ καὶ ἄλλους θεοὺς ...

One of them was Anāhitā (see on p. 82.76f.).

82.98f.: τὸ δὲ πῦρ ...

See my article in *BZ*, 57 [1964], 36. Fire worship was the mark of Zoroastrianism *par excellence*. See Xanthus, *ap. Nic. Dam.*, *FGrHist*, 90, F 68: the principles of Zoroaster include prohibitions of cremation and of other pollutions of fire. Cf. also Dinon, *ap. Clem. Alex.*, *Protrept.*, V.65.1, and Strabo, p. 732. So too Procopius, *BP*, II.24.2: τὸ μέγα πυρεῖον ... ὃ σέβονται Πέρσαι θεῶν μάλιστα. οὗ δὴ τὸ πῦρ ἄσβεστον φυλάσσοντες μάγοι τὰ τε ἄλλα ἐς τὸ ἀκριβὲς ἐξοσιοῦνται καὶ μαντεῖα ἐς τῶν πραγμάτων τὰ μέγιστα χρῶνται. ... Agathias was certainly influenced by this passage—cf. p. 82.99f., ἄσβεστον οἱ μάγοι φυλάττουσι, and what he says about fire divination. For modern fire worship, see E. S. Drower, "The Role of Fire in Parsee Ritual," *Journal of the Royal Anthropol. Inst.*, 74 (1944), 75ff., M. Boyce, "The Fire-Temples of Kerman," *Iranian Studies presented to Kaj Barr* (Copenhagen, 1966), 51 ff.

82.100: ἐς ἐκεῖνο ἀφορῶντες ...

This is not from the Zoroastrian tradition (see Wikander, *Feuerpriester*, 7).

82.101: τῶν ἐσομένων πέρι ...

See Proc., *BP*, II.24.2, and compare Catullus, 90.2; Cic., *De div.*, I.41. 90: *in Persis augurantur et divinant magi, qui congregantur in fano commentandi causa atque inter se conloquendi*. See also Geo. Pis., *Heracl.*, I.60:

ποῦ νῦν ὁ λῆρος τῶν ἀεισφαλῶν μάγων;
ποῦ τῶν ἐν ἄστροις ὀργίων τὰ σκάμματα;
ποῖος πέσοντα Χοσρόην ὥροσκοπεῖ;

82.103f.: ἐκ πλείστων ὅσων ἔθνῶν ἡρατισμένη . . .

So Agathias does realize that the Assyrians are not the same as the Persians, but he seems to think all the same that there are elements in Sassanian religion which go back as far as Assyria—while still maintaining that it was all changed at the time of Zoroaster.

84.109f.: πρῶτοι μὲν γάρ . . .

Jacoby prints the whole passage (to p. 86.152) as Alexander Polyhistor (*FGrHist*, 273, F 81). See, however, p. 102ff., and my "Zonaras, Syncellus and Agathias—a Note," *CQ*, N.S., 14 (1964), 82f.

84.109–86.155 [Chronographical Section: *Brief conspectus of Persian chronography—the Assyrians, the Medes, the Persians, the Macedonians, the Parthians, and the forming of the Sassanian dynasty.*]

This section is in the form of an excursus within an excursus, a chronological record of the various kingdoms which preceded the Sassanians, from the Assyrians on. The problems are largely concerned with the sources and, except for the last part, they do not involve Oriental material. This is, in fact, an insertion which Agathias took largely from the Ctesian chronicle tradition followed by Eusebius and other chronographers, and then enlivened with his own comments and expansions. It is significant for the hint it gives (or fails to give) as to the contents of the work of Alexander Polyhistor, and (more important) for the light which the end of the section throws on the content of the Royal Annals in Agathias' day. I shall have to deal with this section at length, so the next part of the Commentary is concerned only with chronography. Agathias goes back to his Oriental source material at p. 86.150f.

The whole passage is reproduced by Syncellus, Bonn ed., 676.15f., with only a few abbreviations, and Syncellus, *ibid.*, 677.13f. and 678.6f. reappear as Zonaras, XII.15 (Bonn ed., 572.7–10) (direct from Syncellus—see my article in *CQ*, N.S., 14 [1964], 82f.). Syncellus certainly copied his section from Agathias (*ibid.*), no doubt thinking it worth including, though it conflicts with what he says elsewhere about Persian chronology, as the only detailed account in Greek of the founding of the Sassanid dynasty. De Boor was wrong, therefore, to suppose that Syncellus and Zonaras had a common source in some chronicle dating from the reign of Heraclius (*BZ*, 1 [1892], 29).

There is considerable confusion in this passage; so much so that it was dismissed by E. Schwartz (*RE*, 1, s.v. "Alexandros [Polyhistor] [88]") as "Byzantine nonsense." At p. 120.17f. Agathias gives a figure of 538 years for the duration from Alexander to the beginning of the Sassanian dynasty, which he places in the fourth year of Alexander Severus (cf. p. 86.152). This is a Seleucid date and agrees very well with other Syriac and Oriental sources (note *ad loc.*; on p. 88.213f., see *infra*, p. 110). But it does not cohere with the sum of the dates given in this chronographical section. It is my

belief that the discrepancy can be explained on the assumption that Agathias is combining two Oriental versions, together with a mass of material from Greek sources, without, perhaps, realizing the conflict. If this is so, it means that the excursus is not mere nonsense, and it carries interesting implications for the Royal Annals.

As for the authors whom Agathias professes to be following, some modern scholars have taken his claims at face value (e.g., Iorga in *Byzantion*, 2 [1925]). This is *a priori* unlikely to be right. Agathias was not much of a scholar, and it would have been surprising if any writer had done research of such a fundamental kind at this date. The very form of the citations looks suspicious, especially the introduction of Ctesias with the telltale words καὶ Διόδωρος ξύμφοισιν (p. 84.124). There are considerable difficulties, moreover, in accepting the credentials which Agathias offers for his statements. It is highly likely that he did not go back himself directly to any of the authors he names. For a more sympathetic, but mistaken, view, see Schnabel, *Berossos*, 150f.

84.109f.: πρῶτοι μὲν γὰρ . . . καταστησάμενος . . .

This derives ultimately from Ctesias (*FGrHist*, 688, F 1b = Diod., II.1; Euseb., *Chron. Arm.*, Karst, 27.9f.; Syncellus, Bonn ed., 313.4f.). Cf. esp. Syncellus, *ibid.*, 313.12f. (= Diod., II.20): αὕτη μὲν οὖν βασιλεύσασα τῆς Ἀσίας ἀπάσης πλὴν Ἰνδῶν, and 119.9 (Africanus): πρῶτος ἦρξε Νίνος ἀπάσης τῆς Ἀσίας πλὴν Ἰνδῶν; Euseb./Jerome, Helm, 20a: *Primus omnis Asiae exceptis Indis regnavit Ninus, Beli filius*; Ps.-Dion. Telm., 1: <*Primus rex*> *totius Asiae excepta India fuit Ninus, Beli filius*.

84.111–130: Νίνος τε πρότερον . . . διακόσια ἔτη . . .

This is printed by Jacoby, *FGrHist*, as Ctesias, F 1o (β). See below on the difficulties.

84.112ff.: Σεμίραμις τε αὖ μετ' ἐκείνον . . .

Semiramis follows Ninus in all accounts—e.g., Diod., II.7.1; cf. Euseb., *Chron. Arm.*, Karst, 26–29, Syncellus, Bonn ed., 119.11 (Africanus), etc.

Schnabel, *Berossos*, 150f., argues from p. 84.114–124 (Polyhistor, *FGrHist*, 273, F 81, § 4) that Polyhistor was using Ctesias in the main, with additions from Berossus. It is most unlikely, however, that he was following only one main source—Jacoby, *FGrHist*, IIIa (comm.), 289. As we are in the dark about the relative dates or identities of Bion, Athenocles, and Simacus, little can be deduced from this passage about Polyhistor's sources. Is it clear in any case that the citation of Polyhistor (p. 84.118) covered everything from 84.118 to 84.124? It would be more natural to refer it only to what it immediately follows. That would give Agathias a reason for his second mention of Polyhistor.

We can distinguish Ctesian and non-Ctesian elements here. The account of Beletaras (p. 84.114f.) is not from Ctesias but from Berossus—see Leh-

mann-Haupt, in Roscher, *Lexicon*, s.v. "Semiramis," and "Βηλιτανῶς und Βελιτάρης," *Orientalische Studien Theodor Nöldeke ... gewidmet* (Giessen, 1906), II, 997ff. What is more, though Agathias has obviously developed the gardening metaphor to his own (bad) taste, it goes back to an old Babylonian saga-motif (Schnabel, *op. cit.*, 152). In Ctesias' version there was only one dynasty (Diod., II.21: καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ βασιλεῖς, παῖς παρὰ πατρός διαδεχόμενος τὴν ἀρχήν, ἐπὶ γενεᾷς τριάκοντα ἐβασίλευσαν μέχρι Σαρδαναπάλλου). According to Lehmann-Haupt, the Beletaras version is the true founding story displaced by the Ctesian Semiramis saga against which Berossus protested (p. 93, *supra*). The Ctesian version starts at p. 84.118 with the mention of Sardanapallus and Arbaces the Mede (cf. Diod., II.23f.), and the phrase ὥς ἐκεῖνοί φασι (p. 84.118) certainly attributes this to Bion and Polyhistor.

If we assume that the whole section as far as p. 84.124 derives from Polyhistor we should have to suppose that Agathias himself noticed that Diodorus gave the same date as Ctesias (p. 84.123f.), and added the reference. This would hardly conform to what we know of his practice in other cases, nor to his apparently scanty knowledge of Diodorus. ὥς ἐκεῖνοί φασι may indeed show that Polyhistor used Ctesias as well as Berossus, if we can trust Agathias, but it seems most unlikely that Agathias himself took this section from Polyhistor. The mode of citation of Ctesias and Diodorus (which seems, from the use of τοὺς χρόνους ἀναγραφαμένῳ, to refer only to the *date* for the Assyrians) is surely an example of a method familiar in many late authors, whereby a string of authorities is named and the source given last, with the telltale "and also ...," or alternatively, where the source is not named at all, merely the authorities named *by* the source. Here we know that the citation of Bion and Polyhistor did not come from Diodorus. Agathias is surely suppressing his actual source and just giving the names, including that of Diodorus, contained in it. If Agathias copied the whole passage, in outline at least, from a source later than Diodorus there is no reason for supposing that Polyhistor preserved Ctesias' Assyrian date, though he may have mentioned Arbaces the Mede.

Bion is otherwise unknown, but see Schnabel, *op. cit.*, 153.

84.119f.: Ἀρβάκης ὁ Μῆδος καὶ Βέλεσος ὁ Βαβυλώνιος ... ἔξ τε καὶ τριακοσίων ἤδη πρὸς τοῖς χιλίοις ...

This is of course, as Agathias tells us, the Ctesian date for the Assyrians—cf. Diod. II. 21 and 28. Agathias' 1306 years are represented at Diod., II. 28, by ἔτη πλείω τῶν χιλίων καὶ τριακοσίων; at II.21, Diodorus gives the figure as 1360. Syncellus, however, quoting Diodorus II.21 (Bonn ed., 313.18 and 317.9), guarantees that the original figure was 1306. Agathias then has the true Ctesian figure (cf. also Justin, *Epit. hist.*, I.2.13 [1300]; Euseb., *Chron. Arm.*, Karst, 32 = Castor, *FGrHist*, 250, F 1d [1300]; though cf. Syncellus, Bonn ed., 318.4).

84.120: καθελόντες τὸν βασιλέα . . .

According to Diodorus, II.27, and Athenaeus, XII.38 [529 b–d], Ctesias' version made Sardanapallus commit suicide by burning himself on a great pyre. Cf. also Nic. Dam., *FGrHist*, 90, F 2 and 3.

84.124 f.: Μῆδοι τοίνυν αὐθις ἐκράτουν . . .

The three-hundred-year duration for the Medes (the "long" chronology) is again the Ctesian version as against the Herodotean one (Herod., I.98–107). For the ubiquity of this Ctesian version, see my article in *BZ*, 57 [1964], 40, and cf. Diod., II.42–44.

84.129: τὰς ξὺν Ἀστυάγει παρατάξεις . . .

Cf. Nic. Dam., *FGrHist*, 90, F 66.

84.129 f.: κρατήσαντες δὲ . . . οἱ Περσικοὶ βασιλεῖς . . .

Agathias now gives us Africanus' figure for the Achaemenids—230 years or 228 years 23 months—cf. Euseb., *Dem. Ev.*, VIII.2; Syncellus, Bonn ed., 497.2; Ps.-Leo Gramm., Bonn ed., 49.2; etc. The reckoning is from 559 to 330, i.e., from Cyrus' first year, fixed at Ol. 55.1 (*Exc. Barb.*, Frick, I, 312; cf. Ps.-Leo Gramm., Bonn ed., 46.17), to Alexander's first Babylonian year, i.e., the death of Darius III (Euseb., *Chron.*/Jerome, Helm, 124; *idem*, *Chron. Arm.*, Karst, 33; J. A. Cramer, *Anecdota Graeca*, II [Oxford, 1839], 147.11; *Chron. Pasch.*, Bonn ed., 321.1).

84.132–143: Ἀλέξανδρος γὰρ ὁ Φιλίππου Δαρεῖον ἀποκτείνας. . . τοιγάρτοι ἄρξαντες οὐ λίαν ἐλάττονα χρόνον τῶν Μήδων, ὅτι μὴ ἑπτὰ ἔτεσι δέοντα (πειστέον γὰρ κάνταῦθα τῷ Πολυίστορι) . . .

Syncellus (Bonn ed., 677) and *Suda* (s.v. Ἀρσάκης) interpret the phrase ἑπτὰ ἔτεσι δέοντα to mean 293 years (i.e., the Median duration minus seven). The difficulty is that, if Agathias really is following Polyhistor here (p. 84.143), we should have to suppose both that Polyhistor had the three-hundred-year duration for the Medes and that he was still writing in 30 B.C. (293 years calculated from 323, the death of Alexander). It is just possible that Polyhistor was still writing in 39 B.C. (G. F. Unger, "Wann schrieb Alexander Polyhistor?" *Philologus*, 43 [1884], 529, and cf. *idem*, "Die Blütezeit des Alexander Polyhistor," *Philologus*, 47 [1889], 177f., Jacoby, *FGrHist*, IIIa [comm.], 248f.), but even if we were to extend his activity as late as 30 B.C. it seems *prima facie* unlikely that a writer who based himself largely on Berossus in his *Χαλδαϊκά* would have used the Ctesian figure for the Medes as a measure for dating the Macedonians, even supposing that he gave the Median duration as three hundred years at all.

Conceivably Agathias took from Polyhistor, or more probably a later source, the statement that the Macedonians ruled for seven years less than the Medes, without further details. But more probably he started from the

figure 293 and did his own deduction from his own Median figure. For the figure 293 is amply attested as a conventional duration for the Ptolemaic kingdom in Egypt, calculated to the death of Cleopatra the Great in the twenty-second year of her reign. Cf. *Exc. Barb.*, Frick, I, 280, 320, 330 (giving 294); cf. Euseb., *Chron. Arm.*, Karst, 33; Porphyrius, *ap. Euseb., Chron. Arm.*, Karst, 79 (giving 293); Ps.-Leo Gramm., Bonn ed., 49 ff. (294); etc. What Agathias is giving us is not the duration of the Seleucid branch of the "Macedonians," which he ought to have given us, but that of the Ptolemaic branch—an easy mistake, for the term Macedonians was regularly used for "Ptolemies" (cf. Syncellus, Bonn ed., 584, 496; Euseb., *Dem. Ev.*, VIII.2 [Africanus]; Ps.-Leo Gramm., *loc.cit.*; etc.), while the Seleucids were known as "Syrians" (Sync., 552, etc.). Clearly Agathias *thought* that he was giving a date for the beginning of the Parthian era—cf. p. 84.123 f. His terminus could not therefore be the conquest of Syria by Tigranes of Armenia (Jacoby, *FGrHist*, IIIa [comm.], 289, *contra* Unger, in *Philologus*, 43 [1884], 529). The similarity of Agathias' figure with that for the *whole* Ptolemaic period suggests rather that his dates really refer to that, i.e., that he has taken for his Seleucid duration a set of figures which refer to Egypt. In that case, what of Polyhistor? On the evidence of Agathias alone we can only assume that Agathias here was drawing on a source later than Polyhistor. Either that source or Agathias himself has confused the exact portions of the chronographical synthesis which do in fact derive from Polyhistor.

It is interesting that Agathias shows no trace of the fanatical hatred of Alexander which we find in the later Oriental sources (e.g., *Dēnkard*, VIII.1.21 [SBE, 37,9]), on his burning of the sacred books in the sack of Persepolis); this is of course because, although he used information from Persia for most of his excursus, the chronographical section, as far as p. 86.150 at least, comes wholly from Greek material.

84.144 f.: Παρθυαῖοι γε αὐτοῦς, . . . παρέλυσαν τῆς ἀρχῆς . . .

Agathias' mistake in giving the Ptolemaic date causes difficulties here also. The words πλὴν Αἰγύπτου (p. 84.146) clearly show that he *thought* he was giving the duration of the Seleucids, for, as he implies, he knew that Macedonian rule continued in Egypt *after* the founding of the Parthian era. He is not therefore suggesting that the Parthian kingdom dated only from 30 B.C.; he is referring to its real founding (cf. the derivation of the name *Arsacidae* in Africanus, *ap. Euseb., Chron. Arm.*, Karst, 97, and Dio Cass., XL.14; see J. Wolski, "L'historicité d'Arsace Ier," *Historia*, 8 [1959], 222, who does not, however, quote Agathias or Syncellus' repetition of the Agathias passage, nor indicate that the *Suda's* notice s.v. Ἀρσάκης comes from Agathias also). The chronographers had a date for the beginning of the era—248 B.C. (Euseb., *loc. cit.*; *idem, Chron.*/Jerome, Helm, 132; Syncellus, Bonn ed., 539 [from Arrian]; Ps.-Dion. Telm., 35. Cf. also Justin, *Epit. hist.*, 41.4, and Strabo, p. 515).

84.147: Ἀρσάκου μὲν πρότερον . . .

Parthian genealogy: J. Wolski, "Arsace II et la généalogie des premiers Arsacides," *Historia*, 11 (1962), 138ff.; cf. also *idem*, in *Historia*, 8 (1959), 222ff. Agathias has nothing to add for the elucidation of the beginning of the dynasty.

86.150: Ἑβδομήκοντα δὲ ἐτῶν ἤδη ἐπὶ διακοσίοις . . .

Where did Agathias find this figure? As a date for the period from the beginning of the Parthian dynasty to that of the Sassanids it is far too short; and it conflicts with the 538 years which Agathias gives elsewhere for the same period (IV.24, p. 120.17, on which see note *ad loc.*). He could not have found it in Greek sources; Eusebius had no date for the duration of the Parthian dynasty since he did not mark the seizure of power by Ardashēr. Nor, it seems, did the sources of Syncellus—at least, Syncellus tells us nothing beyond his extract from Agathias. I believe that this figure comes from Agathias' Persian sources. So too Nöldeke, *Tabarī*, p. xvi, note 3, without explanation. Agathias is certainly drawing on his Persian material at the end of this passage (p. 86.155f.), and the striking congruence between his Parthian date and the evidence of the Persian-Arabic sources suggests that he found his Parthian duration there too.

It has long been noticed that many Persian and Arabic sources shorten the period from Alexander to the beginning of the Sassanian era (cf., e.g., E. Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, I [London, 1902], 119; S. H. Taqizadeh, "Some Chronological Data relating to the Sasanian Period," *BSOS*, 9, pt. 1 [1937], 138; H. Lewy, "Le calendrier perse," *Orientalia*, 10 [1941], 60f.). It was acknowledged that the chronology of this period was obscure—cf., e.g., Firdausī, *Le livre des rois*, trans. J. Mohl, V (Paris, 1877), 217; Bīrūnī, trans. C. E. Sachau, I (London, 1876), 127 [129]; Mas'ūdī, *Les prairies d'or*, text and trans. C. Barbier de Meynard and Pavet de Courtelles, II (Paris, 1863), 137; Ta'alībī, *Histoire des rois de Perse*, text and trans. H. Zotenberg (Paris, 1900), 458; and, later, Mīrkhōnd, trans. E. Rehatsek, pt. 1, vol. 2 (London, 1892), 320. The number of years most commonly given was 266, with variations between 260 and 300. Some at least knew the real date of over 500—e.g., *Tabarī*, Nöldeke, 1; Ta'alībī, Zotenberg, *loc. cit.*; Bīrūnī, Sachau, 116–27. The shortened form was said to be the result of a falsification by Ardashēr in order to ensure that certain prophecies of Zoroaster were fulfilled (cf. Mas'ūdī, *op. cit.*, IX [Paris, 1877], 327; see Taqizadeh, *op. cit.*, 138, Lewy, *op. cit.*, 60f.). Mas'ūdī says (*op. cit.*, II, 137) that those who maintain the shortened date do so "par suite des controverses religieuses." In view of the obscurity that prevailed about the whole period, the shortened figure may have been a simple mistake, and Mas'ūdī's explanation mere aetiology. See H. Lewy, "The Genesis of the Faulty Persian Chronology," *JAOS*, 64 (1944), 197ff., S. Taqizadeh, "The Era of Zoroaster," *JRAS* (1947), 33ff., Henning, *Zoroaster, Politician or Witch-doctor?* 37–38, Taqizadeh (*BSOS*, 9 [1937], 138) dates the falsification or

mistake on general grounds earlier than Chosroes. If I am right, Agathias' evidence confirms this. He will be our earliest source for it, for none of the Persian or Arabic sources was written earlier than the ninth century.

Was the shortened figure in the Khvadhāynāmagh? Its appearance in Agathias strongly suggests that it was already in the Persian Royal Annals, from where it must surely have passed into the Khvadhāynāmagh (Book of Lords) when it was compiled at the end of the Sassanian period. There are some other indications that this was so. While Firdausī does not give a specific figure, he seems to support a date in the 200's rather than the 500's (Mohl, V, 216); further, Ta'ālībī mentions "l'auteur du *Schāh-nāmeh*" in connection with the reign of the first Arsacid (Zotenberg, 457), and Bīrūnī cites as his authority for the figure 266 and a table of Arsacid reigns a "synopsis of the *Shahnamah*" (Sachau, 116). Firdausī, it is true, states that the Arsacid reigns were not given in the Khvadhāynāmagh (Mohl, V, 270), but this does not exclude a figure appearing there for their total duration. Lewy (in *Orientalia*, 10 [1941], 60f.) argues that the Zoroastrian clergy must always themselves have known the correct figure (as indeed Agathias does), but the shorter one appears to have been current very early—and on the assumption that it *was* a falsification, it is *this* one that will have been in the Royal Annals.

When therefore his Greek sources failed him, Agathias turned to his Persian material. He made the mistake of supposing that the figure which in reality was meant to cover the whole period from Alexander to the Sassanians covered only the Parthians. How natural this was we can see from the rationalizing explanation of the shortened figure given by Bīrūnī (Sachau, 116f.), according to whom it was a mistake born out of the confusion of the period, caused by supposing that the Arsacids followed on immediately after Alexander, so that the Seleucids, or "Macedonians," dropped out.

86.151: Ἀρσάκου τοῦ προτέρου . . .

It might seem tempting to emend προτέρου to πρώτου, for the sense required is clearly "first," to correspond with "Artabanus the last king," but see Keydell, 75.2, *app. crit.* Unger's view (*Philologus*, 43 [1884], 530) that Agathias changed πρώτου in his source to προτέρου, to mean "the first of two kings, Arsaces and Mithridates," depends on his view that Polyhistor was the source for the Macedonians; see *supra*, however.

NOTE: Agathias' Sources for Chronographical Section

This is formally a very conventional piece, but Agathias has enlivened it by writing it up to suit his literary ideas—for instance, by the development of the elaborate metaphor from gardening (suggested by Beletaras' profession) with which he adorns his description of the second Assyrian dynasty (p. 84.115f.), and by adding at intervals his own rather obvious remarks (pp. 84.128, 84.138, 86.153, etc.). In view

of his apologies for the "dry" catalogue of Sassanian kings which he promises to give later (p. 88.209f.), and his wish that his history should be pleasing as well as instructive (III.1, Keydell, 84.5–6), it is perhaps surprising that he felt his chronographical section suitable for inclusion.

On the face of it, Agathias has consulted four sources—Bion, Polyhistor, Ctesias and Diodorus. All we know of this part of Polyhistor's *Χαλδαϊκά* comes from Agathias. Nevertheless, the citation of Diodorus seems to me sufficient to indicate that Agathias was not simply following Polyhistor. It would indeed be surprising if he were, for he is on the whole very ignorant of earlier historiography. Further, if he did use Polyhistor, he must have consulted other sources too; it is hardly likely that Agathias would have had the specialist skill to produce such a synthesis himself. It is more reasonable to suppose that he found it in some handbook of chronology, of the type which undoubtedly existed (H. Gelzer, *Sextus Julius Africanus und die byzantinische Chronographie*, pt. 1 [Leipzig, 1880], 125), just as he found most of his Herodotean vocabulary by searching through lexica (my article in *BZ*, 57 [1964], 44f.). There was a recent model for Agathias—the *Χρονική Ιστορία* of Hesychius of Miletus, which went from Belus to the death of Anastasius and which included synchronizations (*Suda*, s.v. 'Ησύχιος Μιλήσιος). Cf. p. 88.199f.

86.151f.: ἡνίκα τὰ Ῥωμαίων πράγματα . . .

Agathias dates the beginning of the Sassanian era elsewhere (IV.24, p. 120.18f.) to the *fourth* year of Alexander Severus—i.e., A.D. 226. See note *ad loc.*

86.155ff. [*Ardashēr founds the Sassanian dynasty and furthers the power of the Magi. Ardashēr's origins: the story of Sasan and Papak. Promise of more information on the Sassanians later in the History.*]

86.155: Ἀρταξέρης

For the forms of the name see Th. Nöldeke, in *Beiträge zur Kunde der indogermanischen Sprachen*, ed. A. Bezzenberger, IV (1878), 35, note 2. It is noticeable that Agathias' account of Ardashēr is based entirely on his Persian material; he shows no sign of any acquaintance with Greek sources.

86.155–160: Ἀρταξέρης . . . ἀνενεώσατο τὴν βασιλείαν
See my article in *CQ*, N.S. [1964], 14, 83.

86.156: ἄδοξος μὲν τὰ πρῶτα . . .

Cf. IV.24, p. 120.35: (Odenathus) ἀνὴρ ἀφανὴς μὲν τὰ πρῶτα καὶ ἄγνωστος and see note *ad loc.* Agathias is here reflecting the *popular* tradition about Ardashēr, which emphasized his lowly origins—see on p. 86.177f. The Khvadhāynāmagh version, on the other hand, traced his descent to the

Avestan saga-kings and the Achaemenid dynasty (cf. Ṭabarī, Nöldeke, 2, 3). With Agathias compare George of Pisidia, *HerACL.*, II.173f.:

Τὸν Ἀρτασὴρ μὲν, δοῦλον ὄντα τὴν τύχην,
 τυραννικῶς λέγουσι καὶ θρασεῖ ξίφει
 Πάρθους ἀποστήσαντα τοῦ τότε κράτους
 εἰς αἰχμάλωτον ὄνπερ ἤρπασε θρόνον
 ἀντενθρονίζειν ἐν κακοῖς τὴν Περσίδα.

86.161: μαγικῇ . . .

See on p. 82.74f. Ardashēr's religious revival: *Dēnkard*, IV, Madan, 412–15 (trans. Zaehner, *Zurvan*, 7–9); Chron. of Arbela, Sachau, 31. According to this tradition Ardashēr, through his chief priest, Tansar (or Tōsar), ordered a recension of the Arsacid Avesta and established a canonical text, making Mazdeism in effect the official state religion. On the attempt of Wikander (*Feuerpriester*) to deny the establishment of Mazdeism under Ardashēr, see Duchesne-Guillemin, *La religion*, 278f. On the Sassanian church in Ardashēr's day, see R. N. Frye, "Notes on the Early Sassanian State and Church," *Studi orientalistici in onore di Giorgio Levi della Vida*, I (Rome, 1956), 314ff.

86.161: αὐτουργὸς τῶν ἀπορρήτων.

Malchus, fr. 20 (*FHG*, IV, 131f.) (on Pamprepus): ἕτερα τῆς ἀρρήτου σοφίας εἶδέναι—magic? But Agathias uses the word in a neutral sense; cf. also III.2, Keydell, 85.23; 12, Keydell, 99.28 (of Christianity). Here it means simply "doctrines" or mysteries. Agathias' evidence on Ardashēr provides useful material for the disputed question of the religion of the early Sassanians. See M.-L. Chaumont in *JA*, 253 (1965), 172. For Ardashēr as magician (in accord with the standard non-Persian view of Persian religion, which Agathias does not share), see the Syriac work "The Cave of Treasures," cited *ap.* Gottheil, in *Classical Studies in Honour of Henry Drisler*, 26: "Idsher was the first to occupy himself with the signs of the Zodiac and destinies, lots, coincidences, quiverings, and other things belonging to the science of the Chaldeans."

86.162: τὸ μαγικὸν φῦλον . . .

Agathias dates the rise of the Magi firmly to the reign of Ardashēr: cf. A. Christensen, *Die Iranier* (Munich, 1933), 289f. This is another vexed subject: summary of views in Zaehner, *Zurvan*, 18f. We cannot be sure whether Agathias means us to take φῦλον literally (cf. Herod., I.101).

86.162f.: ἐξ ἐκείνου . . .

Cf. Ammianus, XXIII.6.35, on the Magi: *aucti paulatim, in amplitudinem gentis solidae concesserunt et nomen, villasque inhabitantes, nulla murorum firmitudine communitas, et legibus suis uti permissi, religionis respectu sunt honorati*. But see Clemen, *Nachrichten*, 206–07. It would be unwise to press

Agathias' evidence on the Magi; he is probably following the common practice of attributing to Ardashēr all the innovations in Sassanian religion. A good deal of the establishment of the state church, including the organization of the Magi, in fact took place in the reign of Shāhpuhr I and later, as we can see from the great inscription of Shāhpuhr's minister Kartēr on the Ka'ba of Zoroaster (M. J. Sprengling, "Kartīr, Founder of Sasanian Zoroastrianism," *AJSLL*, 57 [1940], 197f.). Magi in Herodotus' day—Herod., I.132.

Here as elsewhere Agathias' account of Persian religion is very idiosyncratic. He had excellent contemporary sources, but he gave his own interpretations of his evidence throughout, reporting his conclusions as though they too were founded on fact. Thus, ὁποῖον ὑπὸ τῶν ἐν τέλει ἔστιν ἡ καὶ περιορᾶσθαι (p. 86.164f.) is merely an inference of Agathias' own, based on his use of the Smerdis story. Compare τοῦτο κεκαινοτόμηται in his remarks on consanguineous marriage (note on p. 80.53f.). He uses the Herodotean Smerdis story, with which he was familiar, to interpret his Persian material in just the same way as he uses the *exempla* of Semiramis and Parysatis.

86.165f.: οὐ γὰρ ἂν οἱ ἀμφὶ Δαρεῖον . . .

See my article in *BZ*, 57 [1964], 38f. Agathias' inference from the Smerdis story is in any case only superficially true, for already in Herodotus' day the Magi controlled sacrifices (I.132) and exercised official functions (Christensen, *Die Iranier*, 289f.). Smerdis: Darius' Behistan inscription (Kent, *Old Persian*, 2nd ed., 116f.), Herod., III.67ff.

86.177f.: Λέγεται δὲ τὴν τοῦ Ἀρταξάρου μητέρα . . .

It is clear that here Agathias' material derives not from the official Annals but from popular accounts of Ardashēr; see A. Christensen, *Les gestes des rois dans les traditions de l'Iran antique* (Paris, 1936), 81. The version of Ardashēr's descent in the Kārnāmagh (one of our few surviving remnants of Sassanian literature) made Papak a local chief and Sasan his herdsman, though in reality of the stem of Dārā. The official version however makes Papak the son of Sasan, of a distinguished family (cf. Ṭabari, Nöldeke, 1f.). Cf. also Agathangelus, 1.3 (Langlois, I, 110), making Ardashēr τις τῶν μεγιστάνων, and 1.6, calling the agents of the revolution οἱ τῶν Περσῶν ἄριστοι. See R. N. Frye, *The Heritage of Persia* (Cleveland, 1963), 207.

88.916f.: ἐν ταῖς βασιλείοις διφθέραις . . .

It is curious that Agathias should choose for his claim to an official source the very place where we can see that he was actually reflecting popular tradition. This shows that he was unaware of the variability of Sergius' material; very probably he was equally oblivious to the fact that in his second excursus he reproduces Syrian bias under the guise of Persian official material—see note on IV.24, p. 136. διφθέραις—cf. Theophylact, III.18.6. Further, on p. 134.285.

88.199f.: τοῖς μέχρι νῦν χρονογράφοις...

Who are these chronographers? Agathias' reference to records of all Roman Emperors from Aeneas (*sic*) to Justin I (p. 88.201f.) suggests that he had a definite source in mind, clearly a contemporary chronicle or chronicles—the source of his chronographical material? He has justifiable pride in his history of the Sassanians.

From the historiographical point of view the inclusion of this chronographical material is of great interest. Agathias was writing a formal secular history. Chronography, on the other hand, belonged above all to Christians. Indeed, Polyhistor, cited twice by Agathias, was, according to Jacoby, otherwise read only by ecclesiastical writers (*FGrHist*, III a [comm.], 289). The fact that Agathias can include this sort of subject matter is further proof of his characteristic blending of Christian and pagan elements (see my *Agathias*, chap. 9).

88.213f.: ἐννέα τε καὶ δέκα καὶ πρὸς γε τριακόσιοι...

At IV.24, p. 120.17, Agathias gives a firm period of 538 years from the death of Alexander to the beginning of the Sassanian era—see note *ad loc.* He knows, too, that Chosroes came to the throne in the fifth year of Justinian (IV.29, p. 132.244f.), so that the synchronization here between the twenty-fifth year of Chosroes and the twenty-ninth of Justinian (E. Stein, *Histoire du Bas-Empire*, II [Paris-Brussels-Amsterdam, 1949], 811f.) is confirmed (see next note). But the 319 years which he gives here for the Sassanian kingdom up to the twenty-fifth year of Chosroes only take us back to 236 instead of 226. Hence Classen's conjecture, 329 for 319 (cf. Nöldeke, *Tabarī*, 429, note 2). If the text is right, Agathias has made a mistake. Note that the 538 figure, which includes the Parthian period, comes only in the second excursus. When Agathias was dealing with the Parthian period in his chronographical section he gave the shortened figure. It seems very likely that he derived only *this* figure from his Persian sources, and that the correct Seleucid figure of 538 years came, whether Agathias realized it or not, from a Syrian source, no doubt Sergius himself. See further, note *ad loc.*

88.214: τὸ πέμπτου τε καὶ εἰκοστὸν ἔτος...

Stein, *Bas-Empire*, II, 811f. This is an exact figure, for Agathias knows the date of Chosroes' accession (see *supra*). Chosroes came to the throne on August 18, 531 (see Taqizadeh in *BSOS*, 9 [1937], 128ff.); his twenty-fifth year therefore began on July 6, 555. Stein presses the pluperfect διήνυστο to imply a synchronization with Justinian's twenty-ninth year, which ended March 31, 556. The date meant would then be between July 6, 555, and March 31, 556. Though Agathias is far from precise in his use of tenses, particularly in his use of the pluperfect (cf. H. Reffel, *Über den Sprachgebrauch des Agathias*, Programm Kempten [Kempten, 1894], 17f.), Stein is probably right, for this is obviously an attempt at exactness.

Neither this synchronization nor the figure for the duration of the Sassanian kingdom to date would have been in the *Annals*. If they derive from Agathias' own calculation, it is likely that the δέκα (p. 88.213) is corrupt, not a mistake. If Agathias' reckoning of Chosroes' twenty-fifth year rested on a Syrian dating, like his 538 figure (which is possible, despite Stein, *Bas-Empire*, II, 811, note 4), the period indicated would be narrowed to October 1, 555 (A.S. 867), to March 31, 556. But, as Stein points out, the use of the pluperfect διήνωστο suggests a date not long after the beginning of Justinian's twenty-ninth year—i.e., before October at any rate.

II

AGATHIAS ON SASSANIAN HISTORY

INTRODUCTION

The value of this excursus, founded as it is on direct information from the Persian Royal Annals, was early recognized (cf. F. de La Mothe le Vayer, *Notitia Historicorum Selectorum*, English trans. W. D'Avenant [Oxford, 1678], 160f.). But there has never yet been a full discussion of the excursus itself or of the problems which it raises. The nearest approach to such discussion is contained in the notes to Th. Nöldeke's fundamental translation of the *Annals* of Ṭabarī (*Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sasaniden. Aus der arabischen Chronik des Ṭabarī übersetzt* [Leiden, 1879]), but, valuable as Nöldeke's comments are, they are by no means complete, while the only study devoted entirely to Agathias' Persian sources (J. Suolahti, in *Studia Orientalia*, 13, [1947]) does little more than scratch the surface.

There is a basic difference between Agathias' two sections on Persia. Unlike the first Persian excursus, this section largely keeps to the material collected for Agathias by Sergius from the βασιλικά ἀπομνημονεύματα (p. 134.285; see p. 162f., *infra*). Since Agathias had a good source on which to work, he had less need to write up this excursus with comments and additions of his own, and the result is accordingly better from all points of view. In the main it is a straightforward annalistic account of the Sassanian dynasty as far as the accession of Chosroes I—a list of the kings with their chronology and a brief account of their doings, as Agathias promised (p. 88.197f.; cf. pp. 153.10f., Keydell 134.294f.). We can therefore compare it directly with the versions in the Arabic and Persian chroniclers whose works date from the ninth century onwards. From the congruence of most of Agathias' account with the later versions it is obvious that the Royal Annals formed the basis of the lost Khvadhāynāmagh or Book of Lords from which the later chronicles are in various ways descended; it ought therefore to be possible to use Agathias' excursus as a direct indication of the contents of the original Khvadhāynāmagh. In principle and in fact this can be done, though the results will be only partial—i.e., we can tell what was *in* the tradition, but not (because of Sergius' abbreviations) what was omitted. In general the Annals must have been, as Agathias describes them, a "dry catalogue." Not, however, as limited as the Shāhpuhr KZ inscription (as envisaged by J. Gagé, *La montée des Sassanides et l'heure de Palmyre. Le mémorial des siècles*, ed. Gérard Walter [Paris, 1964], 193), for the later chroniclers reproduce a good deal of personal material about the kings and their accessions, some of which is reflected in Agathias' account. Some at least of the expansions of the simple chronological account which are found in the later sources must have originated in the Sassanian Annals

themselves. But two factors make the collation of Agathias' version with the later ones a confusing procedure—firstly, the complex problem of the interrelations between the Arabic and Persian chroniclers and the many different versions which they present, and secondly, the difficulty, as yet relatively unperceived, of isolating the genuine annalistic material in Agathias' account.

a) The "Khvadhāynāmagh tradition": by this I mean all the Persian and Arab chroniclers of the ninth century onward who used material going back ultimately to the Pahlavī Khvadhāynāmagh (dated by Christensen, *L'Iran*², 59, to the reign of Yazdgard III). There is a full list and description of the main chronicles in Christensen, *op. cit.*, Introd., p. 69f. They are of uneven value, but this is such a contaminated tradition that it is impossible to dismiss any one section of it as secondary. As illustrations I have taken chiefly the *Annals* of Ṭabarī (Arabic), from the early tenth century, and Firdausi's *Shāh-Nameh* (Persian), from the early eleventh century. The complications in the tradition derive from the number of versions of the Khvadhāynāmagh which were in circulation, from the existence of alternative stories within the Khvadhāynāmagh itself, and from the use by some of the later chroniclers of material drawn from quite different sources—e.g., popular saga-material. The first Arabic translation of the Khvadhāynāmagh was that by Ibn'l-Muqaffa' in the eighth century, but Ḥamza (tenth century) claims to have used eight different works, with different titles, all deriving in various ways from the Khvadhāynāmagh. That there were numerous different translations, with differing contents, was shown by V. R. Rosen in his work *Les traductions arabes du Khuday-namé*, in Russian (St. Petersburg, 1895). For further discussion of the chronicle sources, see Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, Introd.; H. Zotenberg, *Histoire des rois des Perses* (text and trans. of Ṭa'ālībī) (Paris, 1900), Introd.; A. Christensen, *Le règne du roi Kawādh I et le communisme mazdakite*, Kgl. Danske Videnskabernes Selskab, Hist.-filol. Meddelelser, IX, 6 (Copenhagen, 1925); *idem*, *L'Iran*², *loc. cit.*; N. Pigulevskaja, *Les villes de l'état iranien aux époques parthe et sassanide*, French trans. (Paris, 1963), 198; J. Rypka, *History of Iranian Literature*, English trans. (Dordrecht, 1968), 58, 620.

b) Agathias' account: Though in the main a faithful record, Agathias' version of Sassanian history is not entirely what it seems. First, he was at the mercy of the reliability of Sergius, his immediate source (see on IV.30, p. 134.284f.). If Sergius misrepresented his material Agathias had no way of knowing. Hence certainly some of the mistakes in the first Persian excursus. In the second excursus there are details which cannot have been in the *Annals* and must have come from Sergius himself, without Agathias realizing it. Hence those places where Agathias reports a Syrian and a Christian instead of a Persian point of view—see pp. 120.25, 124.100f., 126.58f., 128.167. It is clear that Agathias had no conception of the strictly Zoroastrian bias of the Khvadhāynāmagh and presumably of the *Annals* too; otherwise he could not have represented Yazdgard I, known to the Khvadhāynāmagh tradition as the "sinner," as a virtuous monarch (see on p. 126.143), nor described Valāsh, hated by the Zoroastrian clergy for the favor he showed to Christians, as "gentle and mild"

(see on p. 128.167). Again, Agathias himself tells us that Sergius abbreviated his material (p. 134.294f.); hence, Agathias was in no position to know whether he had done so without misrepresentation. There are in fact places where there seems to be clear evidence of abbreviation (see on pp. 126.146f., 126.151f., 126.153f.). If, therefore, a story is not in Agathias' account, it does not follow that it was not in the *Annals*. And Sergius' abbreviation may have been more drastic than it looks; why else should Agathias have to turn to Procopius, e.g., for the reign of Vahrām V, when he is so eager to persuade us to believe that his version in general is better than Procopius' (p. 134.300f.)? We cannot therefore tell from Agathias' version anything about the scope of the *Annals* or about what was *not* in them, nor does all that he says in fact derive from that source, whatever he may have believed about his information himself.

Secondly, while telling us that he has better information than Procopius (*loc. cit.*), he does not scruple to plagiarize him; see on pp. 126.146f., 128.174f. Similarly, it is not clear whether he had before him the annalistic account of Yazdgard I, but preferred for his own reasons to devote his whole account of the reign to refuting Procopius, or whether Sergius' account in fact failed him at this point (p. 124.114f.). When he gets to the reign of Cavādh (p. 128.170f.), he refers to Procopius' story of Cavādh's escape from the fortress of Lethe (p. 128.192f.) in terms which suggest that he knew another version; if so, he does not say what it was. And when he does say explicitly that his material is more trustworthy than Procopius' (p. 134.300), he is referring to this same reign, the very point in the excursus where he had used Procopius; but he does not tell us which point in his account of Cavādh is a correction of Procopius.

The use which Agathias was able to make of Sergius' extract was limited also by his own attitude to Persia, which was hostile and prejudiced. He hints that his excursus will bring εὐκλεία to Persia (p. 134.291), yet it is really to him only a string of barbarian names for which he feels it necessary to apologize to his sophisticated audience (II.27, p. 88.210). He is afraid that his excursus will seem no more than a "dry catalogue," the mere record of unimportant kings (*loc. cit.*); he takes some pains, therefore, to justify himself for including it. Even the great Chosroes incurs his scorn; he is only a barbarian after all, and his learning can only attain to barbarian standards (see Appendix A). Any pretensions to real wisdom on his part are of course absurd (II.28, p. 164.24f.), and he is readily duped, boasting of his knowledge yet knowing nothing (11.31, Keydell, 81.5: φιλοσοφεῖν μὲν φρουαττόμενον, οὐδὲν δὲ ὅ τι καὶ ἐπαίοντα τῶν αἰσχυτέρων). The ire which Agathias directs against Chosroes' protégé, Uranius (II.28), testifies to the depth of his conviction of Chosroes' incapacity. And when he describes the reactions of the Athenian philosophers to the real Persia he slips from reported speech to the simple statement of what was obviously his own opinion—p. 168.74f.: ἑώρων, ὥς τοιχωρύχοι τε πολλοὶ καὶ λωποδύται οἱ μὲν ἡλίσκοντο, οἱ δὲ καὶ διελάνθανον, ἅπαν τε εἶδος ἀδικίας ἡμαρτάνετο. καὶ γὰρ οἱ δυνατοὶ . . . , etc. With such an attitude—and it was probably a widespread one, for Menander Protector speaks in similar vein of the need καταμαλᾶσαι φρονήματα βαρβαρικά σκληρά

τε καὶ ὀγκώδη (fr. 12 [FGH, IV, 218])—Agathias could have had no understanding of the people whose history he relates, and it is not surprising to find that he fails to appreciate Iranian politics, or the strength and influence of the national religion.

Allowing for all these factors, how much of the genuine contents of the Annals can be isolated from Agathias' account? In general, we can assume that when Agathias shares an anecdote with one or more of the later chroniclers it was in the Annals and in the first version of the Khvadhāynāmagh. Anything in Agathias that can be paralleled from demonstrably *popular* Sassanian sources cannot be assumed to come from the Annals, even where Agathias thinks it does (see my note on p. 88.196f.). If the later chronicles have stories, or divergent genealogies which are not in Agathias, it does not follow that they were not in the Khvadhāynāmagh, for they may have been omitted by Sergius in making his extract. Variant genealogies and chronological data in particular *may* have been in the Khvadhāynāmagh from the beginning; Sergius may well have thought it unnecessary to give alternatives. The case of Narseh and Hormizd II (see on p. 122.59f.) may show that there were already in the Annals two versions of the length of their reigns, one which said that they each reigned for nine years, and another which said that they each reigned for seven years five months. But it may well be that variants were recorded in the Khvadhāynāmagh that had not been in the Annals at all—hence their absence in Agathias. Again, Agathias' account is very selective; it is only a bare chronicle. So we cannot tell whether the Annals were of the same basic type, though fuller, or whether they were on a much more ambitious scale. Nor do we know how early the different versions of the Khvadhāynāmagh came into being.

Not all these problems are soluble. To Agathias' credit, however, is the contribution that his excursus makes to the establishment of the chronology of the period, for his is the best, as it is the earliest, of the king lists (Nöldeke, *Tabarī*, 400). Some of his notices, again, seem to preserve the true early version as against variants in the later chronicles. See for instance on pp. 124.107, 124.112f., 130.214. The omission of any mention of the Persian persecutions of Christians—save in the implied praise of kings who were pro-Christian, which comes from a non-Persian source (see on Yazdgard I, p. 126.143, and Valāsh, p. 128.167—is probably to be ascribed to the nature of the Annals (see note on Shāhpuhr II, p. 146, *infra*). The same is true of the complete absence of Mānī from Agathias' account of Shāhpuhr I (p. 142., *infra*), and probably of the otherwise surprising lack of detail about the Persian wars with Rome in this period. Agathias did not, despite the implication of p. 126.120f., compare his account with Western sources except for Procopius; it is almost entirely derived from Sergius' extract. Agathias would not have found much about the wars with Rome in the Annals; Shāhpuhr I, for instance, lists his conquests in the West in his great inscription (KZ, see on p. 120.25f.), but the Annals, to judge from the later chroniclers, contained only a sketchy outline (see on p. 120.34). Such references as Agathias does give to Western

sources for the period are all of the most vague and sketchy kind (see on pp. 120.24, 120.34f., 124.100f.). On the whole he does not trouble to indicate synchronisms with Roman history—for which we must be glad, since it means that we do not have to contend with the sort of “interpretation” which Agathias gives us in the first excursus.

It is not surprising that Agathias was proud of his excursus. Perhaps it does not come up to modern standards of research, but for Agathias it was no mean achievement, and the very idea of asking Sergius for the transcript from the Annals in itself shows considerable initiative. But it is not, of course, nor was it meant to be, a complete history of the Sassanians. Agathias was chiefly interested in the dynasty and personalities of the kings themselves. We look in vain, if we look at all, for light shed on wider historical issues. For that we need to utilize a wider selection of sources—contemporary inscriptions, popular works, Syrian and Armenian writers. Agathias’ excurses are based only on an abbreviated extract from the Annals, which were themselves selective, supplemented by a certain amount of popular material, all seen from the viewpoint of an outsider and partly reflecting the attitudes of a Syrian. Agathias himself, though proud of them, did not and could not fully perceive their worth. He thought more of portions which are in fact wrong or inauthentic, he made the wrong deductions, and he failed to realize the true value of some of his statements. The task of evaluation must be done for him, by commentators who are in the fortunate position of being able to profit by his mistakes, and to see his merit for what it is.

I append for convenience a table of dates taken from Christensen *L'Iran*². Nöldeke (*Tabarī*, 400f.) was the first to establish the chronology on a firm basis, but the chronology of the reigns of Ardashēr I and Shāhpuhr I remains uncertain. New numismatic evidence may be expected from the Fifth Congress of Iranian Art and Archaeology, Tehran, 1968. Further on the chronology: Lewy, “Le calendrier perse,” *Orientalia*, 10 (1941), 1ff.; S. H. Taqizadeh, “Some Chronological Data relating to the Sassanian Period,” *BSOS*, 9, pt. 1 (1937), 125ff.; *idem*, “The Early Sasanians,” *BSOS*, 11, pt. 1 (1943), 6ff.; *idem*, *Old Iranian Calendars* (London, 1938); and *idem*, “The Dates of Mani’s Life,” *Asia Major*, 6 (1957), 106ff. (translated and with addendum by W. B. Henning); A. Maricq, “Classica et Orientalia 5. Res gestae divi Saporis,” *Syria*, 35 (1958), 346ff.; *contra*, Henning in *Asia Major*, *loc. cit.* Chronological table of the Sassanians: Gagé, *Montée des Sassanides*, 157ff.

	<i>Agathias' Duration</i>	<i>True Date (Christensen)</i>
Ardashēr I	14 yrs. 10 mths.	226–41
Shāhpuhr I	31 yrs.	241–72
Hormizd I	1 yr. 10 days	272–73
Vahrām I	3 yrs.	273–76
Vahrām II	17 yrs.	276–93
Vahrām III	4 mths.	293

} uncertain

	<i>Agathias' Duration</i>	<i>True Date (Christensen)</i>
Narseh	7 yrs. 5 mths.	293–302
Hormizd II	7 yrs. 5 mths.	302–9/10
Shāhpuhr II	70 yrs.	309/10–79
Ardashēr II	4 yrs.	379–83
Shāhpuhr III	5 yrs.	383–88
Vahrām IV	11 yrs.	388–99
Yazdgard I	21 yrs.	399–421
Vahrām V	20 yrs.	421–38/9
Yazdgard II	17 yrs. 4 mths.	438/9–57
Hormizd III	omitted	457–59
Pērōz	24 yrs.	459–84
Valāsh	4 yrs.	484–88
Cavādh I	11 yrs.	488–96
Zāmāsp	4 yrs.	496–98/9
Cavādh I	30 yrs.	498/9–531
Khusrō I (Chosroes)	48 yrs.	531–79*

These figures do not represent the exact dates; in order to get the exact dates, allowance has to be made for the fact that the Persian year did not begin on the same day every year (see Nöldeke, *Tabarī*, 436, for table of New Year's Days). Further, the first regnal year of each king was counted from the beginning of the calendar year in which he ascended the throne. Thus Agathias' figure for Shāhpuhr I probably covers the period from the beginning of the year in which he came to the throne (i.e., 22 September 241, whereas his coronation did not take place until April 243) to the *beginning* of the year in which he actually died (i.e., 14 September 272)—see Taqizadeh in *BSOS*, 11 [1943], 26f. The lists in the sources will therefore vary according to the terminal dates chosen for each reign—the formal beginning or the actual one. Thus, for Vahrām III Agathias' procedure is the opposite of the one he follows for Shāhpuhr I; he gives Vahrām III four months, whereas formally his reign would count as one year. Nöldeke (*loc cit.*) traced all the king lists to the same original, which he dated to the time of Chosroes I. Agathias' list would be our earliest and only contemporary exemplar. In any case, his is the best of the lists that we have. I have not for the most part commented on the chronological problems; all individual cases are fully discussed by Nöldeke. Genealogy of the Sassanian dynasty: R. N. Frye, *The Heritage of Persia* (Cleveland, 1963), Appendix 3.

For a survey of the scanty remains of Sassanian literature, see O. Klíma, in J. Rypka, *History of Iranian Literature*, English trans. (Dordrecht, 1968), chapter 1. Still very useful is the introduction to Christensen, *L'Iran*², containing a very full list and bibliography (to 1944) of all the principal surviving works and of all the main sources for the history of the period. This is still the standard work on Sassanian history, indispensable for any study of the period.

*See Taqizadeh, in *BSOS*, 9 (1937), 128ff.

Still useful too is H. Rawlinson, *The Seventh Great Oriental Monarchy* (London, 1876), which, though defective in its use of the Oriental sources, documents fully from the Greek and Roman authors. Of a more general nature are C. Huart, *La Perse antique et la civilisation iranienne* (Paris, 1925), R. Ghirshman, *Iran*, English trans., Penguin Books (1954), and Frye, *The Heritage of Persia*. For the 3rd century — Gagé, *Montée des Sassanides*. For works dealing with the Persian-Byzantine relations during the period, see the bibliographical note in B. Rubin, *Das Zeitalter Justinians*, I (Berlin, 1960), 483, note 717. On Sassanian art: K. Erdmann, *Die Kunst Irans zur Zeit der Sasaniden* (Berlin, 1943), and see also E. Porada, *Iran ancien, L'art à l'époque préislamique*, French trans. (Paris, 1963), A. Godard, *L'art d'Iran* (Paris, 1962). For illustrations of the rock sculptures in particular, see R. Ghirshman, *Iran. Parthians and Sassanians* (Paris, 1962). Christianity in the Sassanian Empire: J. Labourt, *Le christianisme dans l'empire perse sous la dynastie sassanide* (Paris, 1904). Of general importance, especially for the Mazdakites: Pigulevskaja, *Les villes*.

For Sassanian inscriptions, see now the *Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum*, pt. 3, Pahlavi inscriptions (London, 1957–) (texts). Further, E. Herzfeld, *Paikuli, Monument and Inscription of the Early History of the Sasanian Empire*, 2 vols. (Berlin, 1924), Fr. Sarre and E. Herzfeld, *Iranische Felsreliefs* (Berlin, 1910). For Shāhpuhr I on the Ka'ba of Zoroaster (Shāhpuhr KZ), see Maricq in *Syria*, 35 (1958), 295 ff. (text, French translation, bibliography); also E. Honigmann and A. Maricq, *Recherches sur les Res Gestae Divi Saporis* (Brussels, 1953), M. J. Sprengling, *Third Century Iran: Sapor and Kartir* (Chicago, 1953), B. C. MacDermot, "Roman Emperors in the Sassanian Reliefs," *JRS*, 44 (1954), 76 ff. For the inscription of Kartēr on the Ka'ba of Zoroaster, see M.-L. Chaumont, "L'inscription de Kartīr à la 'Ka'aba de Zoroastre,'" *JA*, 248 (1960), 339 ff. (text, translation, bibliography).

On the Khvadhāynāmagh tradition the basic work is still Th. Nöldeke's translation of Ṭabarī, with full introduction, appendix on chronology, and copious notes. For Firdausi's *Shāh-Nameh* (the Persian national epic), which uses much Khvadhāynāmagh material within a poetic and romantic framework, I have used J. Mohl's translation (*Le livre des rois*, 7 vols. [Paris, 1866–78]); for Eutychius (tenth-century patriarch of Alexandria), the edition of E. Pococke (2 vols. [Oxford, 1658/9]); for Ḥamza (tenth-century), that of I. M. E. Gottwaldt (2 vols. [St. Petersburg–Leipzig, 1844–48]); for Ṭa'ālībī (eleventh century), that of Zotenberg. All other chronicles are fully documented in Christensen, *L'Iran*², Introduction.

The Syrian and Armenian writers are also important, and sometimes vital. The Armenian sources are collected in V. Langlois, *Collection des historiens anciens et modernes de l'Arménie*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1867, 1869), and analysed by M. K. Patkanian, "Essai d'une histoire de la dynastie des Sassanides," trans. E. Prud'homme, *JA*, Ser. 6, vol. 7 (1866), 101 ff. The Syriac chronicles are to be found in *Chronica Minora*, trans. I. Guidi, J.-B. Chabot, E. W. Brooks, CSCO, *Scriptores Syri*, Ser. III. iv, pts. 1–3 (Paris, 1903–05). The chronicle of Ps.-Joshua Stylites, trans. W. Wright (Cambridge, 1882), which goes as

far as the year 506, is important for Pērōz and especially Cavādh; see N. V. Pigulevskaja, *La Mésopotamie du V^e au VI^e siècle après J. Chr.: la chronique syriaque de Joshua le Stylite comme source historique*, in Russian (Moscow–Leningrad, 1940). Later chronicles of value are by Michael the Syrian (twelfth century), trans. J.-B. Chabot, 4 vols. (Paris, 1899–1910), and Barhebraeus (thirteenth century), trans. W. Budge, I (London, 1932). All these sources present a version of events which runs counter to the official Persian one, and which is often the version of Persia's enemies. It is very striking that Agathias, for all his protestations about his official source, sometimes agrees with the Syrian-Armenian tradition as against the Persian.

All other sources are discussed fully by Christensen, *L'Iran*², Introduction.

II

TEXT

258.3 B IV. 23. . . . 7 ὁ δὲ Σαπώρης ἄδικός τε ὢν ἐς τὰ μάλιστα καὶ μαιφόνος καὶ ὀξύς μὲν εἰς ὀργὴν καὶ ὠμότητα, βραδὺς δὲ πρὸς φειδῶ καὶ συγγνώμην, εἰ μὲν καὶ ἐφ' ἑτέροις αὐτῷ πρότερον τόδε τὸ ἄγος ἐξείργασται, οὐκ ἔχω σαφῶς ἀπισχυρίσασθαι· ὅτι δὲ Βαλεριανὸν τὸν Ῥωμαίων ἐν
 5 τῷ τότε βασιλέα προσπολεμήσαντά οἱ καὶ εἶτα νενικημένον, ὁ δὲ Ὡργίρα ἐλὼν τόνδε τὸν τρόπον ἐτιμωρήσατο, πολλὴ μαρτυροῦσα ἡ ἱστορία. 8 καὶ τάχα οἱ πρώτιστοι τῶν μετὰ τὴν Παρθυαίων κατάλυσιν τῆς Περσικῆς βασιλείας ἐπιλαβομένων, Ἀρταξάρης, φημί, καὶ Σαπώρης, μιὰρὼ γε ἦσθιν ἄμφω καὶ ἀδικωτάτω, εἰ γε ὁ μὲν τὸν οἰκεῖον δεσπότην ἀπεκτονὼς
 10 τυραννικὴν τε καὶ βίαιον τὴν ἀρχὴν κατεκτήσατο, ἄτερος δὲ τιμωρίας ἤρξεν οὕτω δεινῆς καὶ μύσους ἀνοσιωτάτου.

24. Ἐπεὶ δέ μοι ὁ λόγος διὰ τῶν αἰεὶ παρεμπιπτόντων φερόμενος, πάλιν ἐς Ἀρταξάρην ἀφίκετο, καιρὸς ἂν εἴη ἐκπληροῦν νῦν τὸ πρότερον ἐπηγγελμένον καὶ τῶν ἐφεξῆς βασιλέων ἐπιμνησθῆναι. οὗτος μὲν οὖν
 259 B 15 ἐξ ὧν τε ἔφυ καὶ ὅπως καὶ ὅν|τινα τρόπον τὴν κίδαριν ἀνεδήσατο, ἥδη μοι ἐς τὸ ἀκριβὲς προαφήγηται. ἐκεῖνο δὲ μόνον προσθεῖναι ἂν ἐπ' αὐτῷ, ὥς ἔτεσιν ὕστερον ὀκτώ τε καὶ τριάκοντα καὶ πεντακοσίοις Ἀλεξάνδρου τοῦ πάνυ τοῦ Μακεδόνης, τετάρτῳ δὲ ἔτει τῆς θατέρου Ἀλεξάνδρου τοῦ Μαμαίης ἀρχῆς, τῆς τῶν Περσῶν βασιλείας ἐπιλαβομένῳ τῷ Ἀρτα-
 20 ξάρῃ, καθ' ὃν πρότερον ἀπήγγελται τρόπον, διήνυσται χρόνος ἐν αὐτῇ ἐνιαυτῶν πεντεκαίδεκα, δυοῖν μηνοῖν ἐνδεόντοιν. 2 διαδέχεται δὲ τὸ κράτος Σαπώρης ἐκεῖνος ὁ ἐναγέστατος, καὶ διεβίω πρὸς τῷ ἐνὶ τριάκοντα τοὺς πάντας ἐνιαυτούς, πλεῖστα ὅσα τοὺς Ῥωμαίους λυμαινόμενος. 3 ἅτε γὰρ τὸν βασιλέα σφῶν ἀνελὼν καὶ οὐδὲν ὀτιοῦν κώλυμα
 25 ἔσεσθαι διανοούμενος, ὁ δὲ ἀνὰ τὰ πρόσω ἐχώρει καὶ δὴ τὴν τε μέσσην τῶν ποταμῶν ἐδήλωσε χώραν καὶ εἶτα τὴν ἐφεξῆς ἐχομένην, Κίλικας τε ἐληΐσατο καὶ Σύρους καὶ μέχρι τῶν Καππαδοκῶν ἐλάσας ἐξαίσιον πλῆθος φόνων κατείργασται, ὥς καὶ τὰ σηραγγώδη καὶ κοῖλα χωρία τῶν ἐν τοῖς ὄρεσι φραγμῶν τοῖς σώμασιν ἀναπληροῦν τῶν πεπτωκότων ἀνθρώ-
 30 πων καὶ πρὸς ἰσότητά φέρειν τῶν λόφων τὰ διεστῶτα καὶ ἐξανέχοντα, καὶ οὕτω καθιππεύειν ἐν αὐτοῖς καὶ διαβαίνειν ὥσπερ ἐφ' ὁμαλοῦ τὰς ἀκρωρείας. 4 τοῦτον μὲν οὖν οἶκαδε αὖθις ἀφιγμένον καὶ οὐ μετρίως χρησάμενον οἷς ἀσεβήσας ἐτύγχανεν, | ἀλλὰ πρὸς ἀλαζονεῖαν ἀρθέντα πολλήν, ἀπέπαυσεν οὐκ ἐς μακρὰν τοῦ φρυγάματος Ὀδέναθος ὁ Παλ-
 260 B 35 μυρηνός, ἀνὴρ ἀφανῆς μὲν τὰ πρῶτα καὶ ἄγνωστος, ταῖς δὲ Σαπώρου συμφοραῖς καὶ οἷς ἔδρασεν ἐπ' αὐτῷ, μεγίστην ἀράμενος δόξαν καὶ πολλοῖς τῶν πάλοι ξυγγραφέων ἀξιαφήγητος γεγεννημένος. 5 τεθνηκός

II

TRANSLATION

[Flaying alive, says Agathias, was first introduced by Sapor I]. . . . 256.18 B

Sapor was very wicked and bloodthirsty, quick to anger and cruelty and slow to mercy and forgiveness. Whether he had made use of this terrible punishment against others previously, I cannot be sure. But that he punished Valerian, the Roman emperor, in this way after taking him alive when he had made war on him and been defeated, many accounts testify. Indeed, the first rulers of Persia after the defeat of the Parthians, Artaxares and Sapor, were both wicked and abominable men, if indeed the one killed his own overlord and set up by force a usurper's rule, while the other initiated such a dreadful punishment and terrible defilement. 258.3 B

But my narrative, by a natural progression, has come back to Artaxares. It is time to fulfill the promise I made earlier, to record the kings who came after him. As for Artaxares himself, I have already told in detail his origins and how he assumed the throne. I will add only this about him—that Artaxares seized the throne of Persia 538 years after Alexander the Great of Macedon, in the fourth year of the other Alexander, the son of Mammaea, in the way that I have already recorded, and held it for fifteen years less two months. The wicked Sapor of whom I have spoken succeeded him, and lived on for thirty-one years more, doing great harm to the Romans. For, after killing their Emperor, and thinking that there would now be nothing to stop him, he advanced further, ravaged Mesopotamia and then the land adjoining it, and plundered Cilicia and Syria, and pressing on as far as Cappadocia caused wholesale slaughter. Even the valleys and hollows of the mountain thickets he filled with corpses and levelled the spaces between the hills and flattened their projecting summits; then he rode across them, traversing the mountain ridges as though they were level ground. When he came home again, far from showing restraint in his use of his ill-won gains, he was puffed up with pride. But it was not long before Odenathus of Palmyra put a stop to his arrogance. Odenathus was at first unknown and obscure, but won great fame as a result of the disasters he inflicted on Sapor, and many earlier historians wrote about him. 258.16 B

δὲ τοῦ Σαπώρου Ὁρμισδάτης ὁ τούτου παῖς τὴν βασιλείαν παραλα-
 βάνει καὶ διεβίω ἐν αὐτῇ χρόνον ἐς ὃ τι ἐλάχιστον· ἐνιαυτὸν γὰρ ἓνα
 40 καὶ δέκα ἡμέρας τῆς τύχης ἀπώνατο, μηδὲν ὅτιοῦν δράσας ὅποιον καὶ
 ἐς λόγου φέρεσθαι μνήμην, καθά πού καὶ ὁ μετ' ἐκείνον Οὐαραράνης,
 τρισὶν ἔτεσι βασιλεύσας. 6 ὁ δὲ υἱὸς ὁ τούτου ὁμώνυμος μὲν ἦν τῷ
 γεγεννηκότι, ἑπτακαίδεκα δὲ κατὰ τὴν βασιλείαν μεμένηκεν ἔτη. ὁ δὲ
 τρίτος Οὐαραράνης ἐς μῆνας μὲν τέσσαρας μόνους ἀπεγεύσατο τῆς βασι-
 45 λείας, Σεγὰν δὲ σαὰ ἐπεκλήθη, οὐκ ἀπεικός, οἶμαι, οὐδὲ αὐτομάτως, ἔθους
 τινὸς παλαιοῦ μετασχὼν καὶ πατρίου. 7 οἱ γὰρ τῶν Περσῶν βασι-
 λεῖς, ἡνίκα μέγιστον ἔθνος τῶν πλησιοχώρων καθέλοιεν προσπολεμή-
 σαντες καὶ τῆς ἐκείνων ἐπιλάβοιντο χώρας, οὐκέτι μὲν ἀναιροῦσι τοὺς
 ἡττημένους, ἐς δὲ φόρου ἀπαγωγὴν ἅπαντας ὑποτιθέντες ἐφιᾶσιν ἐνοι-
 50 κεῖν τε καὶ ἀροῦν τὴν δοριάλωτον· πλὴν ἀλλὰ τοὺς προτέρους τοῦ |
 261 B γένους ἡγεμόνας οἰκτρότατα καταλύοντες, οἱ δὲ τοῖς σφετέροις παισὶ
 τὴν τῆς ἀρχῆς προσηγορίαν ἀπονέμουσι, μνήμης, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἕκατι καὶ
 κόμπου <καὶ> τῆς ἐπὶ τῷ τροπαίῳ μεγαλαυχίας. 8 ἐπειδὴ οὖν καὶ τὸ
 τῶν Σεγεστανῶν ἔθνος Οὐαραράνη τῷ τοῦδε πατρὶ ἐδεδούλωτο, εἰκότως
 55 ἄρα ὁ παῖς Σεγανασὰ ἐπωνόμαστο· δύναται γὰρ τοῦτο τῇ Ἑλλήνων
 φωνῇ Σεγεστανῶν βασιλεύς.

25. Τούτου δὲ θάπτον διαφθαρέντος Ναρσῆς εὐθύς τὴν βασιλείαν ἐνιαυ-
 τοῖς μὲν ἑπτὰ, μηνὶ δὲ πέντε μετῆλθε. διαδέχεται δὲ τὴν ἀρχὴν Ὁρμισ-
 δάτης ὁ παῖς καὶ κληρονομεῖ τοῦ πατρὸς οὐ μόνον τοῦ κράτους, ἀλλὰ
 60 καὶ τῆς τοῦ χρόνου ἰσορροπίας. καὶ γὰρ θαυμάσειεν ἂν τις, ὅτι δὴ ἑκα-
 τέρῳ ἔτεσι τε καὶ μηνὶ τοῖς αὐτοῖς τὰ τῆς ἀρχῆς ἐπιμελέστατα ἐμετρήθη.
 2 ἀλλὰ Σαβῶρ μετὰ τούτους ἐπὶ πλείστον ὅσον καὶ μήκιστον χρόνον
 ἀπώνατο τῆς βασιλείας, τοσούτοις ἔτεσι κρατήσας, ὁπόσοις καὶ διεβίω.
 ἔτι γὰρ αὐτὸν κυούσης τῆς μητρὸς ἡ μὲν τοῦ βασιλείου γένους διαδοχὴ
 65 ἐκάλει πρὸς τὴν ἀρχὴν τὸ τεχθησόμενον. ἦν δὲ τὰ τῶν ὠδίνων ἀμφίβολα
 ἐς ὁποῖαν γονὴν ἂν ἀποβαῖεν. 3 τοιγάρτοι ἅπαντες οἱ ἐν τέλει ἄθλα
 προὔτιθεσαν καὶ γέρα τοῖς μάγοις ἐπὶ τῇ προαγορεύσει τῶν ἐσομένων.
 262 B καὶ τοίνυν ἦγον ἐς μέσον κύουσιν ἵππον καὶ ὥς πλησιαίτατα | προελ-
 θοῦσαν τοῦ τόκου ἐκέλευόν τε αὐτοὺς ἐπ' αὐτῇ πρώτῃ μαντεύεσθαι,
 70 ἅπερ ᾤοντο ξυνενεχθῆναι. οὕτω γὰρ ὀλίγαις ὕστερον ἡμέραις γνώσεσ-
 θαι ἤγοῦντο τὴν πρόρρησιν ἐς ὃ τι χωρήσει ταύτῃ τε εἰκάζειν παραπλη-
 σίως ἐκβήσεσθαι καὶ ὁπόσα σφίσιν ἐπὶ τῇ ἀνθρώπῳ προαγορευθεῖη. ἃ
 μὲν οὖν αὐτοῖς ἐπὶ τῇ ἵππῳ μεμάντευται, οὐκ ἔχω σαφῶς ἀποφῆνασθαι·
 οὐ γάρ μοι τὸ ἀκριβὲς τούτου γε πέρι ἀπήγγελται· πλὴν ἄλλ' οὕτω
 75 ἕκαστα προὔβη, ὅπως ἐκείνοις ἐτύγχανεν εἰρημένα. 4 γνόντες δὲ ἐνθὲνδε
 οἱ ἄλλοι, ὡς ἄγαν τοῖς μάγοις διηκρίβωται τὰ τῆς τέχνης, προὔτρεπον
 καὶ ἐπὶ τῷ γυναιῳ, ἅττα ἔσεσθαι γνοῖεν, διεξίεναι. τῶν δὲ φησάντων
 ἄρρενα παῖδα τεχθήσεσθαι οὐκ ἔτι ἐμέλλησαν, ἀλλὰ γὰρ τῇ γαστρὶ περι-
 θέντες τὴν κίδαριν ἀνείπον βασιλέα τὸ ἐμβρυον ὀνόματί τε ἀπέκριναν

On Sapor's death, his son Hormizd took over the throne, but held it only for a very short time. He enjoyed his good fortune for a year and ten days, without doing anything that has ever been recorded. The next king, Vararanes, who reigned for three years, was the same. Vararanes' son had the same name as his father and reigned for seventeen years. But Vararanes III enjoyed the kingdom for only four months. He was called Segansaa; this was for a special reason, in accordance with an old traditional custom. When the Persian kings defeat in war a large tribe among their neighbors and conquer the country, they no longer kill the conquered people but reduce them all to tributary status and let them live in the captured territory and cultivate it, save that they kill the former leaders of the tribe most cruelly, and give their own sons the title of their kingdom, to commemorate and glorify their pride in their victory. So since the tribe of the Segestani had been enslaved by Vararanes, the father of this King, his son was naturally called Segansaa, for this means in Greek "the king of the Segestani."

This King soon perished and Narses was the next to hold the throne, for seven years, five months. His son Hormizd succeeded him, and inherited not only his father's kingdom but also the length of his reign. It is a surprising fact that each of them reigned for exactly the same number of years and months. But after them Sapor enjoyed his kingdom for by far the longest time, and his reign was as long as his life. For, while his mother was still carrying him, the royal succession summoned the unborn child to the throne. It was not known whether the child would be a boy or a girl. So all the political leaders offered prizes and gifts to the Magi if they could foretell what would come to pass. So they brought out a mare in foal that was very near her time, and told them to prophesy first about this, as they thought the result would be. In this way they reflected that they could know in a few days how their prophecies turned out and could thus judge that whatever they prophesied about the woman would turn out in the same way. What they foretold about the mare I cannot say for sure, for I was not told all the details, except that everything came to pass exactly as they had predicted. The others, judging from this that the Magi were accurate at their craft, urged them to reveal what they thought would happen in the case of the woman too. And when they said that the child would be a boy, they waited no longer but held the crown over her stomach and proclaimed the embryo king,

261.8 B

- 80 τὸ ἄρτι ἐκτυπωθὲν καὶ διωργανωμένον, ἐς ὅσον, οἶμαι, διάττειν ἔνδον
 ἡρέμα καὶ ὑποπάλ्लεσθαι. 5 οὕτω δὲ τὸ ἀφανὲς τῇ φύσει καὶ ἀδηλον
 ἐς τὸ βέβαιόν τε καὶ ἀνωμολογημένον τῇ δοκῇ μεταλαβόντες ὁμῶς
 οὐ διήμαρτον τῆς ἐλπίδος, ἀλλὰ καὶ λίαν ἔτυχον τοῦ σκοποῦ, πολλῶ
 πλέον τῶν δοκηθέντων. τίκτεται γὰρ οὐκ ἐς μακράν ὁ Σαβώρης σὺν τῇ
 85 βασιλείᾳ, ἐννεάζει τε αὐτῇ καὶ ἐγγηράσκει, ἐς ἐβδομήκοντα αὐτῷ ἔτη
 διανυσθέντος τοῦ βίου. 6 κατὰ δὲ τὸν τέταρτόν τε καὶ εἰκοστόν τῆς
 263 B τοῦδε ἀρχῆς ἐνιαυτὸν Νίσιβις ἢ πόλις ὑπὸ Πέρσαις γεγένηται, Ῥωμαίων
 μὲν πάλαι | οὔσα κατήκοος, Ἰοβιανοῦ δὲ τοῦ σφῶν βασιλέως παραδόν-
 τος καὶ προεμένου. ἐν αὐτοῖς γὰρ δήπου τοῖς ἐνδοτέρω χωρίοις τῆς Περ-
 90 σικῆς ἐπικρατείας Ἰουλιανοῦ τοῦ προτέρου Ῥωμαίων αὐτοκράτορος
 ἀθρόον διαφθαρέντος αὐτὸς ἀναγορεύεται ὑπὸ τε τῶν στρατηγῶν καὶ
 τῶν στρατευμάτων καὶ τοῦ ἄλλου ὁμίλου. 7 ἅτε δὲ τῆς ἀρχῆς αὐτῷ
 ἄρτι καθισταμένης καὶ τῶν πραγμάτων, ὥσπερ εἰκός, ταραττομένων,
 καὶ ταῦτα ἐν μέσῃ τῇ πολεμίᾳ, οὐχ οἷός τε ἦν τὰ παρόντα ἐν δέοντι
 95 σχολαίτερον διαθεῖναι. τοιγάρτοι ἀπαλλαξείων τῆς ἐν ὀθνεῖα καὶ δυσμε-
 νεῖ χώρᾳ διαίτης καὶ μόνης τυχεῖν τῆς ἐς τὰ οἰκεῖα ἐπανόδου θάττον
 ἰέμενος ξυνηθήκας τίθεται ἀγενεῖς καὶ ἀσχήμονας καὶ ὁποίας μέχρι καὶ
 νῦν τῇ Ῥωμαίων λυμαίνεσθαι πολιτείᾳ, περιστέλλων ἐς τὰ ὀπίσω καινοῖς
 ὁρίοις καὶ ὑποτεμνόμενος τῆς οἰκείας ἀρχῆς τὸ περαιτέρω ἐκβαῖνον.
 100 8 τὰ μὲν οὖν κατ' ἐκεῖνο τοῦ καιροῦ ξυνενεχθέντα πολλοῖς ἤδη τῶν προ-
 τέρων συγγραφέων ἱστόρηται· ἐμοὶ δὲ οὐ περὶ ταῦτα ἐνδιατρίβειν σχολή,
 ἀλλὰ τοῦ προτέρου λόγου ἐκτέον.

26. Μετὰ γὰρ Σαβώρην Ἀρταξήρ ἀδελφὸς ὢν αὐτῷ καὶ μετασχὼν
 τῆς βασιλείας τεττάρων ἔτῶν χρόνον κατ' αὐτὴν ἀπεβίω. ὁ δὲ υἱὸς ὁ
 105 τούτου, Σαβῶρ δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς ἐπεκέκλητο, ἐν ἔτεσι πέντε τὸ οἰκεῖον
 ἡρίθμησε κράτος· ἐν διπλασίοσι δὲ τούτων καὶ πρὸς γε ἐνὶ ἑτέρῳ ἐνιαυτῷ
 264 B Οὐαραράνης | ὁ παῖς, ὃς δὴ καὶ Κερμασαὰ ὠνομάζετο. 2 τῶν δὲ τοιού-
 των ἐπικλήσεων ἡ αἰτία ἤδη μοι εἴρηται. καὶ γὰρ Κερμὰ ἔθνους τυχὸν
 ἢ χώρας ὑπῆρχεν ἐπωνυμία· ταύτης δὲ τῷ πατρὶ τοῦ Οὐαραράνου δε-
 110 δουλωμένης εἰκότως ὁ παῖς τὴν ἐπωνυμίαν ἐκτήσατο, καθά που πρότε-
 ρον καὶ παρὰ Ῥωμαίοις ὁ μὲν Ἀφρικανὸς τυχὸν, ὁ δὲ Γερμανικός, ὁ δὲ
 ἐξ ἄλλου του γένους νενικημένου ἐπεκλήθη. 3 ἐπὶ τούτοις Ἰσδιγέρδης
 ὁ Σαβώρου τὴν Περσικὴν ἡγεμονίαν παραλαμβάνει, ὁ πολὺς παρὰ
 Ῥωμαίοις καὶ περιλάλητος. φασὶ γὰρ Ἀρκάδιον τὸν βασιλέα πρὸς τῷ
 115 θανάτῳ γεγεννημένον καὶ τὰ μετ' αὐτόν, ὥς πη τοῖς ἀνθρώποις νενό-
 μισται, διατάττοντα, τούτῳ δὴ φύλακι χρήσασθαι καὶ κηδεμόνι ἐπὶ
 τε τῷ παιδί Θεοδοσίῳ καὶ πάσῃ τῇ Ῥωμαϊκῇ καταστάσει. 4 ᾗδεται
 γὰρ οὗτος ὁ λόγος ἐπὶ πλείστον ἐν ἡμῖν ἐκ παλαιοῦ τῇ μνήμῃ παραδο-

designating by this name a creature just formed and shaped just enough I suppose to move about and kick a little inside. And so they changed what is naturally uncertain and unknown by their expectation into revealed certainty, yet even so, their hopes did not fail them; they actually achieved their aim, and even more than they had expected. For not long afterwards Sapor was born, at the same time as his kingdom, and he grew up with it and grew old with it, his life lasting for seventy years. In the twenty-fourth year of his reign the city of Nisibis fell to the Persians. It had long been subject to the Romans, but Jovian their own emperor yielded it and gave it up. For Julian the previous Roman emperor had suddenly been killed while actually in the interior of the Persian kingdom, and Jovian was proclaimed by the generals and the armies and the rest of the throng there. And since he had only just come to the throne, and affairs were naturally disturbed—and all this in the middle of enemy country too—he could not under these circumstances devote much time to settling the present situation. So in order to rid himself of the need to stay in a strange and hostile country and wanting nothing so much as to return home quickly, he made a shameful and disgraceful truce, so bad that it is even now harmful to the Roman state, by which he made the empire contract into new boundaries and cut off the outer parts of his own territory. What happened at that time has been recorded already by many earlier historians. I have no time to spend on these matters—I must take up my narrative.

After Sapor, Artaxares his brother gained the throne and died after a reign of four years. His son, who was also called Sapor, ruled for five years. But his son Vararanes, called also Kermansaa, ruled for double this number, and one more year too. I have already explained about these titles. Kerma was the name of a people or perhaps a place, and after Vararanes' father had conquered it the son naturally acquired the name, just as in former days among the Romans also one man was called, for instance, Africanus, another Germanicus, and another from a different conquered people. After these Yazd-gard the son of Sapor took over the Persian rule. He is the one who is much talked about by the Romans. They say that when the emperor Arcadius was near to death and was settling the succession, as men do, he made this King the guardian and protector of his son Theodosius and of all the Roman state. This story is very widespread, and has been handed down by tradition from generation to generation over a long

263.18 B

- 120 θείς τοῖς ἐφεξῆς καὶ μέχρι νῦν παρά τε τοῖς λογίμοις καὶ τῷ δήμῳ περι-
 γόμενος· γραφῇ δέ τινι καὶ λόγοις ἱστορικοῖς οὐκ οἶδα εὐρὼν τοῦτο
 φερόμενον, οὐδὲ παρ' οἷς τυχὸν τὰ τῆς Ἀρκαδίου τελευτῆς ἀπεμνημόνευ-
 ται, ὅτι μὴ μόνον ἐν τοῖς Προκοπίῳ τῷ ῥήτορι συγγεγραμμένοις. καὶ
 οὐδὲν, οἶμαι, θαυμαστὸν ἐκείνον μὲν ὡς πλεῖστα μεμαθηκότα καὶ πᾶσαν,
 ὡς εἶπεῖν, ἱστορίαν ἀναλεξάμενον καὶ τήνδε παραλαβεῖν τὴν ἀφήγησιν
 125 ἑτέρῳ πρότερον ἐκπεπονημένην, ἐμὲ δὲ αὐτὴν μηδαμῶς ἔτι ἐλεῖν ἐλάχιστα
 265 B εἰδότα, | εἰ γε ἄρα δὴ καὶ ἐλάχιστα. 5 ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνο καὶ μάλα θαύματος
 ἄξιον εἶναι ἡγοῦμαι, ὅτι διεξιὼν τὰ περὶ τούτων οὐχ ἀπλῶς οὕτω τὰ
 ἐγνωσμένα διέξεισιν, ἀλλ' ἐπαινεῖ τὸν Ἀρκάδιον καὶ ἀποσεμνύνει, ὡς
 ἀρίστη χρησάμενον εὐβουλίᾳ. φησὶ γὰρ αὐτὸν οὐ λίαν ἀγχίνουσι εἶναι
 130 τὰ ἄλλα πεφυκότα ἐν τούτῳ δὴ μόνῳ φρενήρη τε καὶ προμηθέστατον
 ἀποδεδεῖχθαι. 6 ἐμοὶ δὲ δοκεῖ ὁ τοῦτο ἀγάμενος οὐ τῇ πρώτῃ ὁρμῇ
 τοῦ βουλευματος τὸ εὐλογον κρίνειν, ἀλλὰ τῷ ὕστερον ἀποβεβηκότι.
 ἐπεὶ πῶς ἂν εἶχε καλῶς ἀνδρὶ ὀθνεῖω καὶ βαρβάρῳ καὶ γένους ἄρχοντι
 πολεμιοτάτου καὶ ὅπως αὐτῷ μετῇν πίστεως τε καὶ δικαιοσύνης ἡγνοη-
 135 μένῳ καὶ πρὸς γε τὰ ἐς θεὸν πεπλανημένῳ καὶ ἄλλογονώμονι τὰ φίλτατα
 παραδοῦναι; 7 εἰ δὲ μηδὲν ὅτιοῦν ἐπὶ τῷ βρέφει ἡμάρτηται, ἀλλὰ
 μεμένηκεν ἢ τούτου βασιλείᾳ βεβαιότατα πρὸς τοῦ κηδεμόνος φυλαττο-
 μένη, καὶ ταῦτα ἔτι ὑπὸ μαζῷ τιθηνουμένου, ἐκείνον ἂν μᾶλλον ἐπαινε-
 τέον τῆς εὐγνωμοσύνης ἢ Ἀρκάδιον τοῦ ἐγχειρήματος. τούτων μὲν
 140 οὖν ἔνεκεν, ὡς πῃ ἕκαστος γνώμης τε καὶ ἀκριβείας ἔχοι, ὧδε κρίνέτω.
 8 ὁ δὲ Ἰσδιγέρδης εἴκοσι πρὸς τῷ ἐνὶ βασιλεύσας ἐνιαυτοὺς οὐδένα πώ-
 ποτε κατὰ Ῥωμαίων ἦρατο πόλεμον οὐδὲ ἄλλο τι κατ' αὐτῶν ἄχαρι
 ἔδρασεν· ἀλλὰ μεμένηκεν ἐς αἰεὶ εὖνους τε ὦν καὶ εἰρηναῖος, εἴτε οὕτω
 266 B συμβάν, εἴτε καὶ ὡς ἀληθῶς | φειδοῖ τοῦ παιδὸς καὶ τῶν κοινῶν τῆς
 145 κηδεμονίας νομίμων.

27. Ἐκείνου δὲ τεθνηκότος Οὐαραράνης ὁ υἱὸς προστάς τῆς ἀρχῆς
 εἰσβολὴν μὲν κατὰ Ῥωμαίων πεποιήται· φιλίῳ δὲ αὐτὸν καὶ ὑφειμένως
 τῶν ἐν τοῖς ὁρίοις ἰδρυμένων στρατηγῶν προσδεξαμένων, ὁ δὲ θάπτον
 ἀπηλλάγη καὶ ἐς τὴν ὑπήκοον ἐπανῆκεν, οὔτε προσπολεμήσας τοῖς
 150 πέλας οὔτε ἄλλως τὴν χώραν σινάμενος. 2 εἴκοσι δὲ κρατήσας ἐνιαυ-
 τοὺς παραδίδωσι τὴν βασιλείαν Ἰσδιγέρδῃ θατέρῳ τῷ οἰκείῳ παιδί, ὃ
 δὴ χρόνος ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ διηνύσθη ἑτῶν ἑπτακαίδεκα καὶ μηνῶν δέπου
 τεττάρων. 3 Περόλῃς δὲ μετ' ἐκείνον ἀναδείκνυται βασιλεὺς, ἀνὴρ
 τολμητίας μὲν ἄγαν καὶ φιλοπόλεμος καὶ πρὸς τὸ μεγαλουργὸν τῆς
 155 γνώμης αἰεὶ τετραμμένος· λογισμῷ δὲ στερεῶς καὶ βεβηκότι οὐ μάλα
 ἐχρήτο, ἀλλὰ πλεον ἦν ἐν αὐτῷ τοῦ βουλευομένου τὸ θρασυνόμενον.
 4 ἀπόλωλε δὴ οὖν κατὰ τῶν Νεφθαλιτῶν ἐπιστρατεύσας, οὐ τοσοῦτον,
 οἶμαι, τῇ ῥώμῃ τῶν δυσμενῶν, ὅποσον τῇ οἰκοθεν ἀκοσμίᾳ· δέον γὰρ

period, and is current even today among both the educated and the ordinary people. But I do not know of its appearance in any record or history, not even in those which treat of the death of Arcadius, except for the works of Procopius the rhetor. This is not surprising—that he, who was so learned and had read the whole of history, so to speak, should come across this story also in some earlier writer, whereas I, who know so little—if indeed what I know can even be described as a little!—cannot find it. But this is what I find surprising, that when he tells the story he does not simply record what he knows, but praises and lauds Arcadius for his wisdom. He was not particularly sensible in other respects, he says, but in this alone showed himself to be shrewd and farseeing. In my opinion anyone who admires this is judging its good sense from later events, not from the first impulse of the plan. How could it be a good thing to hand over one's dearest possessions to a stranger, a barbarian, the ruler of one's bitterest enemy, one whose good faith and sense of justice were untried, and, what is more, one who belonged to an alien and heathen faith? And if we are to grant that he did no harm to the child, but that Theodosius' kingdom was most carefully safeguarded by his guardian, even while he was still a babe at the breast, we ought rather to praise Yazdgard for his decency than Arcadius for the idea. On this subject, however, let each man judge according to his opinion and his judgement. Yazdgard reigned for twenty-one years, without making war once on Rome or doing any harm against it. He remained friendly and peaceable for the whole time, whether by chance or because he really was thinking of the child and the common laws of guardianship.

When he died his son Vararanes came to the throne and made an incursion against the Romans. But when the generals posted on the borders received him in a friendly and peaceable manner he soon gave up and returned to his own territory without making war on the people nearby or damaging the country in any other way. After ruling for twenty years he handed on the kingship to his son, Yazdgard II, whose reign lasted for seventeen years and four months. After him Peroz was proclaimed king, a man who was overbold and fond of war, always prone to grandiose schemes. He had no firm or steadfast judgement—there was more boldness in him than forethought. He perished in a campaign against the Hephthalites, not so much because of the strength of the enemy, in my opinion, as from his own folly. He should

266.3 B

- αὐτὸν ξὺν τῷ ἀσφαλεῖ κατὰ τὴν πολεμίαν πορεύεσθαι τὰς ἀδήλους
 160 ἐπιβουλὰς προδιασκοποῦντα καὶ φυλαττόμενον, ὁ δὲ λέληθεν ἑαυτὸν
 ἐνέδραις ἀθρόον περιπεσὼν καὶ βόθροις καὶ διώρυξιν, ἐπὶ μήκιστον τοῦ
 πεδίου πρὸς τὸ ἀπατηλὸν μεμηχανημέναις, αὐτοῦ τε ξὺν τῇ στρατιᾷ
 267 B διεφθάρη τετάρτῳ καὶ εἰκοστῷ τῆς βασιλείας ἐνιαυτῷ, καὶ καταλύει
 τὸν βίον ἀκλεῶς, | ἅτε δὴ ὑπὸ τῶν Οὐννων κατεστρατηγημένος· Οὐννι-
 165 κὸν γὰρ γένος οἱ Νεφθαλίται. 5 Οὐάλας δὲ ὁ τούτου ἀδελφὸς ἐπὶ τὴν
 ἀρχὴν ἀναβὰς οὐδέν τι φαίνεται ἀξιαφήγητον δράσας πολέμων ἕνεκα
 καὶ παρατάξεων, οὐ μόνον τῷ πρῶτος εἶναι τοὺς τρόπους καὶ ἥπιος καὶ
 πρὸς ὁρμὰς ἀλόγους καὶ δυσμενεῖς οὐ μάλα διανιστάμενος, ἀλλ' ὅτι
 καὶ βραχὺν ἐπεβίω χρόνον· τέτταρα γὰρ αὐτῷ μόνον ἔτη κατὰ τὴν
 170 βασιλείαν διέδραμεν. 6 ἐπὶ τούτῳ δὲ Καβάδης ὁ Περόλου τῶν Περ-
 σικῶν πραγμάτων κρατήσας πολλοὺς μὲν κατὰ Ῥωμαίων πολέμους
 διήνεγκε, πολλὰ δὲ κατὰ βαρβάρων τῶν προσοικούντων ἔστησε τρόπαια,
 καὶ χρόνον οὐδένα παρήκε ταραχαῖς τε καὶ κινδύνοις ἐγκαλινδούμενος.
 7 ἦν δὲ ἄρα καὶ πρὸς τὸ ὑπήκοον ἀπηνῆς τε καὶ δυστιθάσευτος καὶ οἶος
 175 ἀνακινεῖν τὰ καθεστῶτα ἔς τε τὴν πολιτικὴν δίαιταν καινουργεῖν καὶ
 παρατρέπειν τὰ πάλοι ξυνειθισμένα. λέγεται δέ, ὡς καὶ νόμον ἔθετο
 κοινὰ τοῖς ἀνδράσι προκεῖσθαι τὰ γύναια, οὐ κατὰ τὸν Σωκράτους,
 οἶμαι, καὶ Πλάτωνος λόγον καὶ τὴν ἐν τῷ λόγῳ κεκρυμμένην ὠφέλειαν,
 ἀλλ' ὥστε τῷ προστυχόντι ἐξεῖναι πρὸς ἦν ἂν ἐθέλοι χωρεῖν καὶ τῆς
 180 εὐνῆς μεταλαγχάνειν, εἰ καὶ ἐτέρῳ τῷ ξυνοικοῦσα καὶ ἀποκεκριμένη
 ἐτύγχανε. |
- 268 B 28. Καὶ τοίνυν θαμὰ τοῦτο ἐννόμως ἐξημαρτάνετο, χαλεπαινόντων
 περιφανῶς τῶν δυνατῶν καὶ οὐκ ἀνεκτὸν ἡγουμένων τὴν ἀτιμίαν. ἀλλ'
 οὗτος γὰρ αὐτῷ ὁ θεσμὸς ἐπιβουλῆς τε καὶ καταλύσεως αἰτιώτατος
 185 γέγονεν. τοιγάρτοι ξυμφραζάμενοι ἅπαντες καὶ διαναστάντες καθαι-
 ροῦσί γε αὐτὸν τῆς ἀρχῆς τῷ ἐνδεκάτῳ ταύτης ἐνιαυτῷ καὶ ἔς τὸ τῆς
 Λήθης ἐμβάλλουσι φρούριον. 2 τὸ δὲ τῆς βασιλείας κράτος μετάγουσιν
 ἐπὶ Ζαμάσφην, Περόλου καὶ αὐτὸν παῖδα γεγεννημένον καὶ ἄλλως πραό-
 τητός τε καὶ δικαιοσύνης ἄριστα ἔχειν δοκοῦντα. οὕτω τε ᾤοντο καλῶς
 190 αὐτοῖς ἅπαντα κατειργάσθαι, ὡς ἔξον τὸ λοιπὸν ἐν εὐκολίᾳ τε καὶ
 ῥαστῶνῃ πολιτεύεσθαι καὶ βιοτεύειν. 3 ἀλλ' ὁ Καβάδης οὐκ ἐξ μακρὰν
 ἀποδράσας, εἴτε τῆς γαμετῆς αὐτῷ ξυλλαβομένης τοῦ δόλου, ὡς Προκό-
 πιός φησι, καὶ τὸν ὑπὲρ ἐκείνου θάνατον ὑπελθεῖν ἐλομένης, εἴτε καὶ
 ἄλλῳ χρησάμενος τρόπῳ, ἀποδράσας δὲ οὐν ὁμῶς καὶ ὑπεκβάς τοῦ
 195 δεσμωτηρίου, ᾤχετο παρὰ τοὺς Νεφθαλίτας καὶ γίνεται τοῦ ἐκείνων
 βασιλέως ἱκέτης. 4 ὁ δὲ τὰς ἀτάκτους ῥοπὰς τῆς τύχης διανοησάμενο-
 προσίετό γε αὐτὸν μάλα εὐμενῶς καὶ διετέλει παρηγορῶν καὶ παραιρούς

have looked ahead for hidden traps, and taken precautions, if he was to pass through the enemy country in safety, but instead he was taken by surprise and fell into an ambush—ditches and trenches dug as a trap over a wide area of the plain. He perished there with his army in the twenty-fourth year of his reign, and ended his life in dishonor, outgeneraled by the Huns (for the Hephthalites are a Hunnic people). Valash his brother came to the throne, but did nothing of note so far as wars and campaigns are concerned, not only because he was mild and gentle of character and not quick to undertake attacks and hostilities without good reason, but because he only lived for a short time after this. He only reigned for four years. After him Cavades the son of Peroz ruled over Persia, carrying on many wars against Rome and winning many victories over the neighboring barbarians and so wallowing in trouble and danger that he let no opportunity go by. Toward his subjects, too, he was harsh and unyielding, ready to upset the established order, introduce revolutionary measures into the political life and set aside long-practiced customs. It is said that he actually made a law according to which women were to be available to men in common—not, I am sure, according to the argument of Socrates and Plato, or for the hidden benefit in their proposal, but so that anyone could consort with whichever one he liked, and have intercourse with her, even if she was actually living with another man and set apart for him.

These sins were being committed frequently, with full legality, and the leading men showed their displeasure openly, for they thought the disgrace unendurable. For this law was more than anything else responsible for Cavades' being attacked and deposed. They all rose up and plotted against him, cast him from his throne, and flung him into the fortress of Lethe, in the eleventh year of his reign. They transferred the royal power to Zamaspes, who was also a son of Peroz, and who gave the impression of having a calm and fair disposition. In this way they imagined that they had ensured that for the future they could spend their lives and conduct their affairs in peace and quietness. But Cavades soon escaped. Either his wife helped him in the plan, as Procopius says, and chose to face death on his behalf, or he was helped in some other way. At any rate, he escaped, got out of the prison, and went to the Hephthalites, going as a suppliant to their king. The latter reflected on the uncertain vicissitudes of fortune and received him with great cordiality. He tried

268.1 B

269 B 200 μενος τῆς γνώμης τὸ ἀνιώμενον, τὰ μὲν πρῶτα θωπεῖα τε ἀγαθῇ καὶ
 παραινέσει πρὸς τὰ ἀμείνονα τὸ φρονοῦν ἀναρρωνύσει καὶ πρὸς γε
 τραπέζῃ | δαφιλεῖ καὶ φιλοτησίᾳ θαμὰ προτεινομένη καὶ ἐφυστρίσι τι-
 μίαις καὶ τούτοις δὴ ἅπασι τοῖς εἰς φιλοξενίαν προχειροτάτοις· ὀλίγῳ
 δὲ ὕστερον καὶ τὴν θυγατέρα κατεγγυᾷ πρὸς γάμον τῷ ξένῳ καὶ στρα-
 205 τιὰν αὐτῷ πρὸς τὴν κάθοδον ἀποχρῶσαν παραδούς ἔστειλεν αὐθις, τό-
 τε ἀντιστατοῦν καθελοῦντα καὶ τὴν προτέραν εὐδαιμονίαν ἀνακτησό-
 μενον. 5 ἐπεὶ δὲ πεφύκασι πρὸς τάναντία πολλάκις συμφύρεσθαι τοῖς
 ἀνθρώποις αἱ τῶν δοκηθέντων ἐκβάσεις, τοιόνδε τι καὶ τότε ξυνέβη, καὶ
 πρὸς τὴν ἐφ' ἑκάτερα ῥοπήν τε καὶ κίνησιν ἐπὶ πολλῷ τῷ διαλλάττοντι
 ὁ τοῦ Καβάδου βίος ἐταλαντεύθη, καὶ ταῦτα ἐν χρόνῳ μετρίῳ. 6 ἐκ
 210 μὲν γὰρ βασιλέως πρότερον ὑπόδικος γέγονε καὶ δεσμώτης, ἀπαλλαγείς
 δὲ τῆς εἰρκτῆς φυγὰς καὶ μέτοικος καὶ ἱκέτης, ἐκ δὲ ἱκέτου καὶ ξένου κηδεσ-
 τῆς βασιλέως καὶ οἰκειότατος· εὐθύς δὲ κατελθὼν εἰς τὰ πάτρια ἦθη
 ἀνείλφη πάλιν τὴν ἀρχὴν πόνων ἐκτὸς καὶ κινδύνων, ὥσπερ οὐδαμῶς
 αὐτὴν ἀφηρημένος, ἀλλ' εὐρών ἐτι σχολάζουσιν καὶ οἶον ἐκδεχομένην.
 215 7 ὁ γὰρ Ζαμάσφης ἐκὼν ἀπέστη τοῦ θάκου καὶ μεθεῖναι μᾶλλον ἔγνω
 τὴν βασιλείαν, τέτταρας ἐνιαυτοὺς ἡσθεὶς ἐν αὐτῇ, καὶ ἀπαγορεῦσαι
 μὲν τῷ γαυρουμένῳ τῆς ψυχῆς καὶ φιλοδοξοῦντι, τὸ δὲ ἀπραγμον ξύν
 τῷ ἀσφαλεῖ ἀνθελέσθαι· καὶ προὔλαβε τὴν ἀνάγκην ἢ εὐβουλία. 8 ὁ
 270 B δὲ Καβάδης ἐγκρατὴς γεγεννημένος πλέον ἢ πρότερον ἐς τριάκοντα ἐτέ-
 220 ρους ἐνιαυτοὺς διέμεινε τῆς μοναρχικῆς δυναστείας ἐχόμενος πρὸς τοῖς
 ἑνδεκα τοῖς προτέροις, ὡς τεσσαράκοντα πρὸς τῷ ἐνὶ τοὺς ξύμπαντας
 καθεστάναι, ὁπόσους ἐν αὐτῇ ἐπεβίω.

29. Τὸ μὲν οὖν ἀκριβὲς τῶν ἐπ' αὐτῷ πρότερόν τε καὶ ὕστερον
 συμπεσόντων ἤδη τοῖς πάλαι σοφοῖς ἐν ἱστορίας διεκπεπόνηται τρόπῳ·
 ὁ δὲ τοῖς μὲν προτέροις παρῆται, ἄξιον δὲ οἶμαι γιγνώσκειν καὶ ἐπιση-
 225 μήνασθαι, καλὸν ἂν εἴη προσθεῖναι. 2 θαυμάσειε γὰρ ἂν τις, ὅτι δὴ
 κατ' ἐκεῖνο τοῦ καιροῦ παρὰ τε Ῥωμαίοις καὶ Πέρσαις παραπλήσια
 ἅττα συνελθεῖν ξυνέβη, ὥσπερ αὐτομάτως ἐν ἑκατέρᾳ πολιτείᾳ κατὰ
 τῶν κρατούντων ἐναντίας τινὸς περιφορᾶς ἐνσηψάσης. ἐλαχίστου γὰρ
 230 ἔμπροσθεν χρόνου καὶ Ζήνων ὁ Ῥωμαίων βασιλεὺς ὁ Ἰσαυρος, ὃς δὴ
 πρῶτον Ταρσισκωδίσσεος ἐπωνομάζετο, ὑπὸ Ἰλλοῦ τε καὶ Βασιλίσκου
 καὶ Κόνωνος ἐπιβουλευθεὶς, συνεργούσης ἐς τὰ μάλιστα καὶ Βηρίνης,
 ἐκπέπτωκε τῆς ἀρχῆς καὶ ἐξελήλαται καὶ μόλις ἐς τὴν Ἰσαυρίαν ἀπεσώθη·
 235 πλην ἄλλ' ἐπανῆκεν αὐθις ἐς τὰ βασίλεια καὶ Βασιλίσκον τὸν τυραν-
 νήσαντα οὐ πλέον ἢ ἔτεσι δύο κατελὼν καὶ τοῦ σχήματος ἀφελόμενος
 διετέλει πάλιν ἐχόμενος τῆς ἀρχῆς καὶ πάντα διατάττων, οὐκ ἐπὶ πλεῖ-
 στον μὲν χρόνον, ἐν αὐτῇ δὲ ὅμως ἀπεβίω. 3 κατὰ ταῦτόν τε καὶ Νέ-

constantly to soothe and calm his distress of mind, at first with friendly talk and advice designed to strengthen his mind and bring it to its senses, and with elegant banquets and frequent hospitality, and gifts of costly garments and all that is most suited to the reception of guests. And shortly afterwards he gave his own daughter to be betrothed to his guest, and bestowing upon him a force large enough to bring about his restoration he sent him back to destroy his enemies and recover his former prosperity. And as the outcome of men's expectations is often distorted to the very opposite, something of the kind happened on this occasion too. Cavades' life oscillated in the balance from side to side, with a vast difference between, and in a short space of time. From being a king he became a defendant and a prisoner. On his escape from prison he became an exile, an alien, and a suppliant. From being a suppliant and a stranger, the kinsman and close friend of the king. And as soon as he returned to his own country he recovered his throne without trouble or danger, just as if he had never lost it but had found it empty and as it were waiting for him. For Zamaspes gave up the throne of his own free will and decided to yield up the throne after enjoying it for four years, to renounce the motives of ambition and glory and prefer a safe obscurity. In this way common sense forestalled the inevitable. Cavades became more powerful than before, and remained in control of the royal power for thirty years in addition to the eleven previous ones, so that his reign totalled forty-one in all.

The details of what happened during the first and the second parts of his reign have been treated already in the form of history by earlier scholars. It is appropriate, however, to add something which has been omitted by earlier writers but which I think deserves pointing out. It is a surprising fact that very similar happenings occurred at that time in Rome and in Persia, as though in each state a hostile wind had fallen upon the rulers of its own accord. Only just before this Zeno the Isaurian, the Roman emperor, who was formerly called Tarasicodissa, also lost his throne, as a result of plots by Illus, Basiliscus, and Conon, with considerable help from Verina also. He was driven out and managed to escape to Isauria. But he returned to his kingdom again, killed Basiliscus who had usurped his throne for only two years, took the royal power and continued once more on the throne, conducting all affairs—not for long, however, though he kept the throne until his death. At the same time Nepos, 270.4 B

- 271 B πως ὁ τῆς Ἑσπέρας βασιλεὺς | ὁμοίαις ἢ καὶ μείζουσιν ὠμίλησε συμφοραῖς.
 ὑπὸ γὰρ Ὁρέστου φενακισθεὶς πέφευγεν ἐκ τῆς Ἰταλίας, ἀποβεβληκῶς
 μὲν τὴν ἀλουργίδα, οὐκέτι δὲ αὐτὴν ἀντανεῖλετο, ἀλλ' ἐν ἰδιώταις τε-
 240 λῶν διεφθάρη. 4 οὕτως ἄρα ἐν τῷ τότε μεταβολὰς παραλόγους κατὰ
 τῶν κρατίστων δυνάμεων συνελθεῖν ξυνηνέχθη. ζητούντων μὲν οὖν τὴν
 τούτων αἰτίαν οἱ τὰς τῶν ἀδήλων ἀνιχνεύειν ἀρχὰς εἰθισμένοι καὶ
 λεγέτωσαν ὁποίας καὶ βούλονται, ἐμοὶ δὲ τῆς προτέρας ἐκδρομῆς καὶ
 αὐθις μεταληπτέον. 5 τεθηκότος γὰρ τοῦ Καβάδου κατὰ τὸ πέμπτον
 245 ἔτος τῆς Ἰουστινιανοῦ παρὰ Ῥωμαίοις βασιλείας Χοσρόης ὁ πᾶνν ὁ
 καθ' ἡμᾶς διαδέχεται τὴν πατρώαν ἀρχήν, καὶ πέπραχε πλεῖστα ὅσα
 καὶ μέγιστα, ὧν ἓνια μὲν Προκοπίῳ τῷ ῥήτορι προαναγγέλλονται, τῶν
 δὲ λοιπῶν ἐμοὶ γε τὰ μὲν εἴρηται ἤδη, τὰ δὲ ἀκολουθῶς εἰρήσεται. 6 ὥς
 ἂν δὲ τὸ ξυνεχὲς τῶν χρόνων τελεώτατα διαφυλαχθῇ, τοσοῦτον ἐρῶ
 250 πρὸς τὸ παρόν, ὥς ἐς ὀκτώ τε καὶ τεσσαράκοντα ἐνιαυτοὺς τοῦ κράτους
 ἐχόμενος πολλὰς ἀνεδήσατο νίκας, καὶ γέγονεν ὁποῖος οὕτω πρότερον
 ἄλλος τῶν παρὰ Πέρσαις βεβασιλευκότων ἀναδέδεικται, εἴ γε τῷ παντὶ
 ἐκάστῳ συγκρίνοιτο, οὐδὲ εἰ Κῦρον εἴποι τις ἂν τὸν Καμβύσου οὐδὲ
 Δαρείον <τὸν> Ὑστάσπεω, οὐδὲ μὴν Ξέρξην ἐκείνον, τὸν ἱππῆλατον
 255 μὲν δεικνύντα τὴν θάλατταν, ἐν δὲ τοῖς ὄρεσι ναυτιλλόμενον. 7 πλὴν
 ἀλλὰ τοιοῦτός γε ὢν, ἀκλεὴς γε αὐτῷ ἢ τοῦ βίου καταστροφή γέγονε
 272 B καὶ οἰκτρὰ καὶ τῶν φθασάντων ἀλλοτριω|τάτη. ἐτύγχανε μὲν γὰρ ἐν
 τῷ τότε ἀμφὶ τὰ Καρδούχια ὄρη ἐς κώμην Θαμανῶν διὰ τὴν τοῦ θέρους
 ὥραν καὶ τὴν τῶν τόπων εὐκρασίαν μεταβάς τε καὶ ἐνδαιτιώμενος.
 260 8 Μαυρίκιος δὲ ὁ Παύλου, ὑπὸ Τιβερίου Κωνσταντίνου τοῦ Ῥωμαίων
 βασιλέως ἄρχειν τῶν κατὰ τὴν ἕω ταγμάτων προστεταγμένος, ἐσέβαλεν
 ἄθροον ἐς τὴν Ἀρξιανηνὴν χώραν, πρόσσοικον οὖσαν τῇ τῆς κώμης
 περιοικίδι καὶ ἀγχιτέρμονα· καὶ δῆτα οὐκ ἀνίει δηῶν ἄπασαν ἀφειδῶς
 καὶ ληϊζόμενος. περαιωθεὶς δὲ τὰ ῥεῖθρα τοῦ Ζίρμα ποταμοῦ ἀνὰ τὰ
 265 πρόσω ἔτι ἐχώρει καὶ τὰ ἐν ποσὶν ἐλεηλάτει καὶ ἐνεπίμπρα. 9 οὕτω δὲ
 αὐτοῦ ἄρδην ἅπαντα καταστρεφόμενος καὶ συγκυκῶντος ὁ Χοσρόης, (οὐ
 πόρρω γὰρ ἦν, ἀλλ' ὅσον ἀρθεῖσαν ἤδη θεᾶσθαι τὴν φλόγα) οὐκ ἤνεγκε
 τὴν ὄψιν τοῦ πολεμίου πυρός, ἐπεὶ μήπω πρότερον ἐωράκει. τοιγάρτοι
 αἰδοῖ τε καὶ δέει καταπεπληγμένος οὔτε ἀντεξήει οὔτε ἡμύνετο· ἀλλὰ
 270 τοῖς προσπεσοῦσι πέρα τοῦ μετρίου περιαλγήσας καὶ οἶον ἀπειρηκῶς
 ταῖς ἐλπίσιν αὐτίκα νόσφ' ἦλω ὑπὸ δυσθυμίας δεινῇ τε καὶ ἀνηκέστῳ.
 10 καὶ τοίνυν φοράδην ἀχθεὶς μετὰ τάχους πολλοῦ εἰς τὰ ἐν Σελευκείᾳ
 καὶ Κτησιφῶντι βασιλείᾳ καὶ φυγὴν τὴν ἀναχώρησιν ποιησάμενος οὐκ
 ἐς μακρὰν καταλύει τὸν βίον. |

too, the Western emperor, met with similar or even greater misfortunes. Deceived by Orestes, he fled from Italy. He lost the purple; nor did he recover it, but died a private citizen. In this way then the most powerful rulers at that time met with extraordinary reversals. Let those who are accustomed to track down the origins of obscure things look for a reason, and let them say whatever they like; I must go back to the place where I digressed.

Cavades died in the fifth year of the reign of Justinian over the Romans, and Chosroes the Great of our own day inherited his father's throne. His achievements have been many and great; some of them have been recorded already by Procopius the rhetor, and of the rest I have mentioned some already and will describe others in what follows. But in order to preserve complete chronological continuity I will say this much at the moment, that during his forty-eight-year tenure of the kingdom he won many victories; he became a king such as no other Persian king has ever been before, to compare him with them all singly, not even if anyone were to mention Cyrus the son of Cambyses, or Darius the son of Hystaspes, or even the famous Xerxes who made the sea passable for horses and sailed on the mountains. Yet, though he was a king of this stature, the end of his life was humiliating and pitiful, very different from what had gone before. At that time he happened to have crossed to a village of the Thanani in the Carduchian mountains and to be spending some time there because of the summer heat and the temperate climate of the place. But Maurice the son of Paul, who had been appointed to lead the forces in the East by Tiberius Constantine the Roman emperor, suddenly invaded Arzanene, which bordered and adjoined the land surrounding the village. He engaged in continual merciless plundering and devastation of the country. He crossed the stream of the river Zirma and kept advancing, ravaging and burning all before him. Thus he was causing utter confusion and devastation, and Chosroes, who was near enough for the flames to be discernible, could not bear the sight of the enemy's fires, for he had never seen this before. He was overcome by shame and fear; he did not go out to meet the enemy, or make any defense; instead, he took his present situation too much to heart, and, as it were, having fallen into despair, he was immediately seized, in his depression, by a terrible and fatal disease. He was carried back in great haste to the palaces in Seleucia and Ctesiphon, and after making his retreat a flight he soon afterwards died.

- 273 B 275 30. Ἀλλὰ γὰρ οὐκ οἶδα ὄντινά με τρόπον ἢ τοῦ λόγου φορὰ παρα-
λαβοῦσα καὶ τῷ ἀξιαγάστῳ, οἶμαι, τῶν πράξεων ἡδομένη ἐς τόδε
ἦγαγε προπετείας, ὥς τὰ ἐν μέσῳ ὑπερβάντα τῶν πορρωτάτῳ ἐπιμνησ-
θῆναι. οὐκοῦν ἐπειδὴ νῦν γοῦν ἐπέγνων ὅποι ἀφίγμαι καὶ ὅθεν ἐξέβην,
ἐκεῖνα μὲν ἐατέον πρὸς τὸ παρόν, ἐν τοῖς οἰκείοις ἀναγραφησόμενα
280 χρόνοις· ἐπανήξω δὲ αὐθις ἐς τὸ ξυνεχὲς καὶ ἀκόλουθον τῶν προτέρων.
2 ἢ τε γὰρ τῶν Περσικῶν βασιλέων διαδοχὴ καὶ ὁ τῶν ἐνιαυτῶν κατά-
λογος καὶ συλλήβδην φάναι ἅπαν μοι τὸ ἐπηγγελμένον ξυνετελέσθη.
οἶμαι δὲ ἄγαν ἀληθῆ ταῦτα καθεστάναι καὶ ἐς τὸ ἀκριβὲς ἐκπεποιημένα,
ὥς δὴ ἐκ τῶν Περσικῶν βίβλων μεταληφθέντα. 3 Σεργίου γὰρ τοῦ
285 ἐρμηνέως ἐκεῖσε γενομένου καὶ τοὺς τῶν βασιλικῶν ἀπομνημονευμάτων
φρουρούς τε καὶ ἐπιστάτας μεταδοῦναί οἱ τῆς περὶ ταῦτα γραφῆς
ἐκλιπαρήσαντος (πολλάκις γὰρ αὐτὸν ἐς τοῦτο προτρέψας ἐτύγχανον),
προσθέντος δὲ καὶ τὴν αἰτίαν, ὥς οὐκ ἄλλου του χάριν ζητοίῃ τῶνδε
τυχεῖν ἢ ὥστε καὶ παρ' ἡμῖν ἀνάγραπτα ἔσεσθαι τὰ σφίσι ἐγνωσμέ-
290 να καὶ τίμια, παρέσχον εὐθύς εὖ γε ποιοῦντες ἐκεῖνοι, οὐκ ἄχαρι τὸ
χρῆμα εἶναι ἡγούμενοι, ἀλλὰ καὶ πρὸς εὐκλείας τοῖς σφῶν βασιλεῦσιν
274 B ἐσόμενον, εἰ μέλλοιεν καὶ παρὰ Ῥωμαίοις | γινώσκεσθαι, ὁποῖοί τε
γεγόνασιν καὶ ὁπόσοι, καὶ ὅπως ἢ τοῦ γένους αὐτοῖς ἀποσέσωσται τάξις.
4 λαβὼν οὖν ὁ Σέργιος τὰ τε ὀνόματα καὶ τοὺς χρόνους καὶ τῶν ἐπ'
295 αὐτοῖς γεγενημένων τὰ καιριώτερα καὶ μεταβαλὼν εὐκόσμως εἰς τὴν
Ἑλλάδα φωνήν (ἦν γὰρ δὴ ἐρμηνέων ἄριστος ἀπάντων καὶ οἶος ὑπ' αὐ-
τοῦ Χοσρόου θαυμάζεσθαι, ὥς ἐν ἑκατέρᾳ πολιτείᾳ τὰ πρωτεῖα λαχὼν
τῆς ἐπιστήμης), εἰκότως οὖν ἀκριβεστάτην ποιησάμενος τὴν μετάφρασιν
ἀπεκόμισέ τέ μοι ἅπαντα μάλα πιστῶς καὶ φιλίως καὶ προὔτρεψε διανύειν
300 τὴν αἰτίαν, ἐφ' ἣπερ αὐτὰ καὶ παρείληφε. καὶ τοίνυν διήνυσται. 5 ὥστε
εἰ καὶ Προκοπίῳ τῷ ῥήτορι ἔνια τῶν ἐπὶ Καβάδῃ ἀφηγηθέντων ἐτέρως
ἀπήγγελλται, ἀλλ' ἡμῖν ἀκολουθητέον τοῖς Περσικοῖς χειρογράφοις
καὶ τῶν ἐν αὐτοῖς φερομένων ὥς ἀληθεστέρων ἀντιληπτέον. τούτου δὴ
305 οὖν ἡμῖν τοῦ πόνου τελεώτατα ἐξειργασμένου, φέρε πρὸς αὐτὴν αὐθις
ἐπανίωμεν τὴν τῆς ἱστορίας ξυνέχειαν. . . .

I do not know how the flow of my narrative has caught me up like this. In its pleasure at these stirring events it has driven me to such impetuosity that I have gone on to what lies a long way ahead, passing over what comes in between. So, as I have now at any rate realized the point I have reached and the point from which I started, I must leave this topic for the present, to relate it in the appropriate place. I will go back to my continuous narrative at the point where I left off. I have completed the list of Persian kings and the chronological table and, to put it briefly, I have fulfilled the whole of my promise. It is my belief that this is quite true and accurate, since it was translated from the Persian books. When Sergius the interpreter went there he asked the officials in charge of the Royal Annals to give him access to the records (for I had often urged him to do this). He added his reason—that his sole purpose in wanting this was so that their affairs could be recorded by us also and become known and honored. They agreed at once—rightly—thinking the idea a good one. It would actually bring credit to their kings, they thought, if the Romans too knew what they were like and how many they were, and how the succession of their dynasty had been preserved. So Sergius extracted the names, the chronology, and the most important happenings in their time, and translated all this most skillfully into Greek (for he was the best interpreter, admired by Chosroes himself as having the highest possible reputation for learning in both states). So it was to be expected that he made a very accurate translation, and he gave it all to me in a most conscientious and friendly way, and urged me to make good the reason for which he had procured it. This has been achieved. So if Procopius the rhetor has a different version of any of my account of Cavades, we ought still to follow the Persian writings, and prefer their account as being the more nearly true. So now that I have fulfilled this task in great detail, come now, let us return to the point from which I digressed . . .

273.1 B

COMMENTARY

120.16f. [*Duration of Ardashēr's reign. Reign of Shāhpuhr I, his campaigns. Hormizd I, Vahrām I, Vahrām II, Vahrām III, Narseh, Hormizd II, accession and reign of Shāhpuhr II. Jovian yields Nisibis to Persia.*]

120.16: ἐκεῖνο δὲ μόνον προσθεῖν . . .

For Ardashēr, cf. II.26, p. 86.155f. It is unlikely that Agathias found this date in a Greek source, for the change of government in Persia passed relatively unnoticed, at least in surviving writers, despite Ps.-Mos. Chor., II.69 (Langlois, II, 116): "l'histoire de cette époque est écrite par un grand nombre de Perses, de Syriens et de Grecs." The only date to be extracted from the brief notices of Dio Cassius (LXXX.3) and Herodian (VI.2.6f.) is that the first *news* of Ardashēr reached Rome in the fourteenth year of Alexander Severus (i.e., A.D. 234/5. See Herodian, VI.2.1). I have pointed out in *CQ*, N.S., 14 (1964), 82f., that the passage from Zonaras, XII.15, cited by Boissevain in his edition of Dio, *ad loc.*, comes in fact from Agathias via Syncellus.

The figure 538 is not reconcilable with Agathias' figure of 270 years for the Parthians (p. 86.150). He seems to think that the "Macedonians" ruled for 293 years (p. 84.142, see p. 103f., *supra*); but 293 plus 270 is 563, not 538. The 538 years is a Seleucid date, found in Syrian sources—e.g., Jacob of Edessa, Brooks, 212: *anno 538^o Graecorum . . . stetit subito et praevaluit regnum ultimum Persarum . . .*; Elias of Nisibis, Brooks, I, 26: *<secundum computum Jacobi Edesseni> . . . Anno 538^o Alexandri coepit initium regni Persarum filiorum Sasan*; Barhebraeus, Budge, I, 95 (cf. Lewy, "Le calendrier perse," *Orientalia*, 10 [1941], 1f.). It was certainly known in Persia (see *supra*, on p. 86.150, and S. H. Taqizadeh, "Some Chronological Data relating to the Sasanian Period," *BSOS*, 9 [1937], 125ff., *idem*, "The Early Sasanians," *BSOS*, 11 [1943], 6ff.). Thus the Book of Mānī synchronizes the second year of Ardashēr with the year 539 of the Babylonian era (which began 311 B.C.); the Acts of the Persian martyrs synchronize A.S. 799 with 261 of the Persian era, which leads back to 538 exactly (G. Hoffmann, *Auszüge aus syrischen Akten persischer Martyrer* [Leipzig, 1880], 78). And Ṭabarī places the "springing" of Ardashēr 523 years after the rule of Alexander in Babylon. (Nöldeke, 1; see Taqizadeh, in *BSOS*, 11 [1943], 24). The Seleucid era was in use in Persia during the Sassanian period, and Bīrūnī (*supra*, p. 105) assumes that learned Sassanians would have known the true figure. But Agathias, as Nöldeke remarks, surely got his 538 years from a *Syrian* source, not from his Persian material where he would not have found the synchronization with Alexander Severus; compare Jacob of Edessa, *loc. cit.*: *anno 7^o (sic) Alexandri filii Mammaeae*.

Thus Agathias seems to be clearly dating the reign of Ardashēr from A.D. 226, and not 223 or 224, the year in which he killed Artabanus; contrast Ṭabarī's statement that the reign was reckoned "vom Fall des Ardashēr" (Nöldeke, 21). The date 226 would represent the beginning of the Persian year in which Ardashēr was crowned or conquered Ctesiphon—cf. Taqizadeh, in *BSOS*, 11 [1943], 22, and Lewy, *op. cit.*, 45f. He was actually king of Stakhr as early as 208 (inscription of Shāhpuhr I at Shāpūr, cf. R. Ghirshman, in *Revue des arts asiatiques*, 10, No. 3 [1936], 127–28).

Even if I am right in suggesting that the 538 years derive from a Syrian, not a Persian, source, its value as a calculation of the dates of Ardashēr is hardly diminished. Nöldeke and Taqizadeh reckon the early Sassanian chronology from 226, whereas W. B. Henning proposes dating Ardashēr (and with him the dependent reigns of Shāhpuhr I, Hormizd I, Vahrām I, as well as the death of Mānī, whose dates are central to this problem) from a base year of 223. See Henning, in *Asia Major*, 6 (1957), 117, and cf. *ibid.*, 3 (1952), 196f. Taqizadeh's datings, from the year 226, are set out in *BSOS*, 9 and 11, and in *Asia Major*, 6. The striking agreement of Agathias with the third-century testimony of Mānī as well as with the later Syriac sources makes his evidence here hard to reject—see A. Maricq, "Classica et Orientalia 5. Res Gestae Divi Saporis," *Syria*, 35 (1958), 347–48.

120.17f.: Ἀλεξάνδρου τοῦ πάνυ τοῦ Μακεδόνης . . .

Niebuhr, note *ad loc.*, supposes that Agathias has made a mistake in thinking that the "era of Alexander" referred to a date in the life of Alexander the Great when in fact it began only in 312 B.C., after his death. But the Seleucid era, beginning in 312, the date of Seleucus' return to Babylon, was commonly called the "era of Alexander," and Agathias is merely following the convention: see, e.g., *Chronicon Maroniticum*, Chabot, 41 and esp. 43: *aerae Alexandri, quae incipit ex quo regnavit primus in Syria, qui est Seleucus Nicator*.

120.18: τετάρτῳ δὲ ἔτει . . .

Cf. p. 86.2f.: ἡνίκα τὰ Ῥωμαίων πράγματα ὑπὸ Ἀλεξάνδρου τῷ Μαμαίας παιδὶ ἐτετάχατο . . . Cf. Taqizadeh, in *BSOS*, 11 (1943), 9: the date should be the fifth year. Agathias, or his source, has failed to calculate from the zero year.

120.20f.: διήνυσται χρόνος ἐν αὐτῇ . . .

See Taqizadeh, in *BSOS*, 11 [1943], 17, for all the sources for the duration of Ardashēr's reign. Agathias agrees with Ṭabarī's second version (Nöldeke, 22); other sources for the same figure—*BSOS*, 11 (1943), 18. It is certainly the correct one—see Henning, in *Asia Major*, 6 (1957), 108 and 116 (though Henning's remark that this duration is guaranteed by its appearance in sources "so far apart in the tradition" is merely a typical example of the failure to realize Agathias' real place in the tradition; he is in fact very

closely related to Ṭabarī via the Khvadhāynāmagh, no matter how far removed they are from each other chronologically). There are four possibilities for the base date from which this duration was calculated, according to the peculiarities of the Persian calendar (*supra*, p. 117)—a) the beginning of the Persian year in which Ardashēr killed Artabanus, i.e., September 27, 223, b) the actual death of Artabanus, April 28, 224, c) the official date of Ardashēr's coronation, i.e., September 26, 226, d) the real date of Ardashēr's coronation, April 6, 227, on Taqizadeh's calculations. See Henning, *op. cit.*, 108.

120.22: Shāhpuhr I: ὁ ἐναγέστατος

A very hostile account, continuing and expanding the view of Shāhpuhr I which Agathias has already expressed (p. 120.1f.), where he calls him ἄδικός τε ... καὶ μαιφόνος, because of the flaying of Valerian—see *infra*. Suolahti (in *Studia Orientalia*, 13 [1947], 5), indeed, advances this section as evidence of the one-sidedness of the Annals. But this is a basic misunderstanding of Agathias' source. We should expect Shāhpuhr's cruelty to be *commended* in the Persian tradition, as befits the tone of Shāhpuhr's Ka'ba of Zoroaster inscription (Shāhpuhr, KZ). Thus Ṭabarī says of him without sign of condemnation, "er tödtete die Soldaten, machte Frauen und Kinder zu Sklaven und erbeutete grosse Summen die dort [Nisibis] für den Kaiser lagen" (Nöldeke, 32), and Firdausī's account is wholly favorable. Eutychius, indeed (Pococke, I, 376), even goes so far as to say *summa ... cum iustitia inter homines versatus est*. Further *infra*.

120.22f.: πρὸς τῷ ἐνὶ τριάκοντα τοὺς πάντας ἐνιαυτοὺς ...

See further Taqizadeh, in *BSOS*, 9 (1937) and 11 (1943). His final dates (*Asia Major*, 6 [1957], 114) are as follows: official beginning of Shāhpuhr's reign, September 22, 241; actual succession, February, 242; coronation, April 9, 243; death, April, 273. Agathias' duration belongs to a well defined group among the many strands of the Persian tradition (set out in *BSOS*, 11 [1943], 19 and 26f.); the differences are accounted for by the different possible *termini*. Thus Agathias' thirty-one years would be from Shāhpuhr's official accession to the beginning of the Persian year in which he died.

120.24: ἅτε γὰρ τὸν βασιλέα ... ἀνελών ...

The Oriental sources offer no help on the question of Valerian's fate, except for the tradition that he was forced to labor at the great dam at Shōstar (cf. Ṭabarī, Nöldeke, 33; Christensen, *L'Iran*², 221, note 1) and a story recorded by Ṭabarī (*loc. cit.*) according to which Shāhpuhr released him after cutting off his nose. It is to the Christian moralists, beginning with Lactantius, that we owe the stories of Valerian's being used as a human mounting block and then flayed (Lact., *De mort. pers.*, 5.2; Euseb., *Vita Const.*, IV.11, *Orat. Const.*, 24.2; Orosius, VII.22; and cf. Peter Patr., fr. 13 [FGH, IV, 188f.]). The pagan writers, who had no axe to grind

against the persecutor Valerian, were more moderate (*Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, Gall., 1, Valer., 4; Zosimus, I.26.2). It has been argued (though without total conviction) that the favorable picture of Valerian in *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* is an answer to Lactantius (see most recently A. Alföldi, in *Historia-Augusta-Colloquium, Bonn, 1963* [= *Antiquitas*, Reihe 4, Band 2], 1 ff., and cf. also H. Mattingly, "The Religious Background of the 'Historia Augusta'," *HThR*, 39 [1946], 215). At any rate, Agathias knew the Christian version, since he refers to Valerian's flaying elsewhere (p. 258.9–10, mentioning πολλή ἡ ἱστορία); it is interesting that he does not develop the *Tendenz*.

Shāhpuhr commemorated his victory by several monuments—the Ka'ba of Zoroaster (KZ, see *infra*), a relief at Naqsh-i Rostam (Fr. Sarre, *Die Kunst des alten Persien* [Berlin, 1923], pl. 74; Christensen, *L'Iran*², fig. 14), three reliefs at Shāpūr (Fr. Sarre and E. Herzfeld, *Iranische Felsreliefs* [Berlin, 1910], pls. 43–5 and p. 220 f.; Christensen, *L'Iran*², fig. 15). For the identification of the figures in the Valerian reliefs, see B. C. MacDermot, "Roman Emperors in the Sassanian Reliefs," *JRS*, 44 (1954), 76 f.

For the historical problems surrounding Shāhpuhr's campaigns, see A. Alföldi, in *Berytus*, 4 (1937), 56 ff.; A. T. Olmstead, in *Classical Philology*, 37 (1942), 241 ff.; M. I. Rostovtzeff, "Res Gestae Divi Saporis and Dura," *Berytus*, 8 (1943–44), 17 ff.; W. Ensslin, *Zu den Kriegen des Sassaniden Schapur I*, Sitzungsberichte d. Bayer. Akad. d. Wissensch., Phil.-Hist. Klasse, 1947, Heft 5 (Munich, 1949) (who, however, follows the chronology of M. J. Higgins, *The Persian War of the Emperor Maurice I. The Chronology* [Washington, D.C., 1939]); R. N. Frye, in *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, 8 (1951), 103 ff. On the date of the capture of Valerian, see J. Fitz, *Ingenuus et Régalien*, Coll. Latomus, 87 (Brussels, 1966).

In accordance with the Khvadhāynāmāgh tradition Agathias speaks only vaguely of Shāhpuhr's campaigns, referring only to the final one which saw the capture of Valerian. But three are distinguishable on the KZ inscription, the first achieving the defeat of Gordian, the second an incursion into Syria after the defeat of a Roman army at Barbalissos.

120.25 f.: ὁ δὲ ἀνὰ τὰ πρόσω ἐχώρει . . .

Cilicia and Cappadocia: Ṭabarī, Nöldeke, p. 32 with note 2; Eutychius, Pococke, I, 382. Cf. Shāhpuhr KZ, trans. Maricq, "Classica et Orientalia 5. Res Gestae Divi Saporis," *Syria*, 35 (1958), 312: "Et la Syrie et la Cilicie et la Cappadoce, nous les avons incendiées, dévastées, pillées. Dans cette troisième campagne nous avons conquis sur l'Empire romain: la ville de Samosate et le plat pays, Alexandrette~, Katabolos~, Aigai~, Mopsuestia~. . . ."

But Agathias is not simply reporting the Persian version (so Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, 32, note 2). His tone is so hostile to Shāhpuhr (cf. p. 120.1 f., ἀδικός τε ὢν ἐς τὰ μάλιστα καὶ μαιφόνος καὶ ὀξύς μὲν εἰς ὀργήν καὶ ὀμότητα . . . and p. 120.34 f.) that we can only suppose that his attitude was conditioned by

what he had heard from his Syrian informant, Sergius. It seems to have escaped his notice—or at least he does not remark on the point—that the Royal Annals would hardly have contained a passage so violently hostile to one of the greatest Sassanian kings. Such a memorable event as Shāhpuhr's progress through Asia Minor was amply remembered in the Syrian sources—cf. *Chronicon ad 724*, Chabot, 98, 115; Jacob of Edessa, Brooks, 212 (cf. Euseb., *Chron.*/Jerome, Helm, 220d). The Syrian sources indeed took over from Eusebius the Christian *Tendenz* against Valerian (cf. *Chronicon ad 724*, Chabot, 98; Euseb., *Chron.*/Jerome, *loc. cit.*), but in Agathias the religious motif becomes a moral one: righteous gratification at Valerian's fate becomes righteous indignation against the wicked Shāhpuhr (cf. p. 120.8f.).

In Agathias' accounts of both Ardashēr and Shāhpuhr I there is, therefore, a good deal of material which does *not* come from the Annals. His main story of Ardashēr's *coup* is a popular version (see *supra*, on p. 86.155f.), and immediately before the beginning of this excursus he has given us his own opinion of Ardashēr's action—p. 120.8f. Ardashēr was wicked and unjust because ὁ μὲν τὸν οἰκεῖον δεσπότην ἀπεκτονῶς, τυραννικὴν τε καὶ βίαιον τὴν ἀρχὴν κατεκτήσατο. This is part of Agathias' policy of interpreting his Oriental material for Greek readers; even he cannot have thought that the Annals would say this sort of thing about the founder of the Sassanian dynasty.

120.27f.: ἐξαίσιον πλῆθος φόνων . . .

Cf. Zonaras, XII.23 (Bonn ed., 596.4): ἐν δὲ τῇ ἐπανόδῳ φάραγγι βαθείᾳ περιτυχὼν ὁ Σαπῶρης, ἣν διελθεῖν τοῖς ὑποζυγίοις ἀπορον ἦν, αἰχμαλώτους ἐκέλευσεν ἀναιρεθῆναι καὶ ῥιφῆναι κατὰ τῆς φάραγγος, ἵν' οὕτως τοῦ βάθους αὐτῆς πληρωθέντος διὰ τῶν νεκρῶν σωμάτων τὰ σφῶν διέλθωσιν ὑποζύγια. Zonaras' anecdote is set in the context of Shāhpuhr's retreat before Odenathus (cf. Agathias, p. 120.35f.), but it is strikingly similar. Shāhpuhr's cruelty is hinted at by Zosimus (I.27.2) and stated more fully by Zonaras again—Bonn ed., 594.15: καὶ πλῆθος αἰχμαλώτων συναγαγόντες, οὐδὲ τροφῆς αὐτοῖς μετεδίδουν εἰ μὴ βραχίστης ὥστ' ἀπολῆν, οὔτε μὴν ὕδατος μετέχειν εἰς κόρον εἶων αὐτοὺς, ἀλλ' ἅπαξ τῆς ἡμέρας οἱ τούτων φρουροὶ ἔλαυνον αὐτοὺς ἐφ' ὕδωρ ὥσπερ βοσκήματα . . . It is clear, in fact, from Shāhpuhr's inscription on the Ka'ba of Zoroaster that a primary purpose of his invasion was pillage; he took advantage of his victory over Valerian, as he had of his earlier victory, to raid Syria and sack as many towns as possible. It is not surprising that the descendants of his victims should have remembered such a scourge nor that Shāhpuhr's cruelty should have become legendary. Bridging the valleys with corpses is of course a version of a regular *topos*: Menander Rhetor mentions the *topos* of *rivers* being filled with corpses (*Rh. Gr.*, ed. L. Spengel, vol. III, p. 374. 13), and cf. Appian, *Hann.*, 28, Sil. Ital., VIII.668f., Lucian, *De mort. dial.*, XII.2, Val. Max., IX.2. Ext. 2, Florus, II.10.18, Claudian, *Laud. Stil.*, I.131f. (*Vos Haemi gelidae valles, quas saepe cruentis / stragibus*

aequavit Stilico . . .), *Paneg. Lat.*, X (4).30.1, Priscian, *Laud. Anast.*, 114f. The closest parallel is from Arrian, *Anab.*, II.11, on Alexander after the battle of Issus: ὡς ἐπὶ φάραγγί τινι ἐν τῇ διώξει ἐγένοντο, ἐπὶ τῶν νεκρῶν διαβῆναι τὴν φάραγγα. This is another example of Agathias writing up his subject matter.

For the source of Zonaras, Bonn ed., 594.15f., see *infra*, Appendix B.

120.34f.: Ὀδέναθος ὁ Παλμυρηνός, ἀνὴρ ἀφανῆς . . . πολλοῖς τῶν πάλαι συγγραφέων ἀξιαφήγητος γεγενημένος.

For the phrase, cf. p. 120.6, πολλή μαρτυροῦσα ἡ ἱστορία, and p. 124.100f., πολλοῖς ἤδη τῶν προτέρων συγγραφέων ἱστορήται. Another piece of information which does not come from the Annals, where the unflattering tale of his exploits was naturally omitted from accounts of Shāhpuhr (in Ṭabarī [Nöldeke, 41] as in Firdausī [Mohl, V, 315] he dies peacefully of old age). Agathias leaves his source very vague: the συγγραφεῖς included in fact Eusebius, *Chron.*/Jerome, Helm, 221d; *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, Trig. Tyr., 14.15, Valer., 4.2–4, Gall., 1, 3, 10, 12; Eutrop., IX.10; Orosius, VII.22.12; Zosimus, I.39; Peter Patr., fr. 10 (*FHG*, IV, 187); and, significantly, Proc., *BP*, II.5.7. But there is no verbal similarity between the statements of any of these writers and what Agathias says. It is noticeable that when he speaks of “many historians” he never gives any details but refers to the story in question only in general terms. Contrast his display of learning in the first Persian excursus, where he is at pains to cite as many names as he possibly can. These references to “many historians” cannot be regarded as showing that Agathias was widely read; they surely show no more than that he knew that the stories he mentions *were* well known. If he had read any non-Oriental accounts of the period covered by this excursus in more than the most superficial manner, we should expect more comments from him, and certainly some *names*. The contrast between the two Persian excursuses is interesting; the first excursus, where he had less genuine Oriental material and called upon more supplementary matter, is inferior to the second, for much of which, as we shall see, he simply copied out the information from Sergius.

120.35: ἀφανῆς μὲν τὰ πρῶτα καὶ ἄγνωστος . . .

Rubin, *Das Zeitalter Justinians*, I, p. 446, note 546, compares this statement with the Book of Elias, which called Odenathus “der niedrigste der Könige” (P. Riessler, *Altjüdisches Schrifttum ausserhalb der Bibel* [Augsburg, 1928], 235; cf. W. Bousset, in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, I [New York, 1928], 580, s. v. “Antichrist”). If Agathias means Odenathus was of lowly *birth*, he differs from Zosimus (I.39). But more probably the phrase ἀφανῆς μὲν τὰ πρῶτα . . . is a simple antithesis, contrasting with μεγίστην ἀράμενος δόξαν. Compare on p. 86.156 where, however, the very similar phrase applied to Ardashēr can be more closely pressed. Another similar phrase—IV.21, Keydell, 149.14.

NOTE: *Agathias on Shāhpuhr I*

We can see that, although he does not report the Persian *attitude* to Shāhpuhr, Agathias does follow in outline the highly selective account of his reign in the Khvadhāynāmāgh tradition. Thus he tells us nothing of Mānī (Christensen, *L'Iran*², 180, note 2). The Khvadhāynāmāgh evidently showed its Zoroastrian orthodox bias at this point by minimizing the truth of Shāhpuhr's sympathy with Mānī, of which we know chiefly from Manichaean sources—Christensen, *op.cit.*, 196f., C. Schmidt and H. J. Polotsky, *Ein Mani-Fund in Ägypten*, Sitzungsberichte d. Preuss. Akad. d. Wissensch., Phil.-hist. Klasse (Berlin, 1933), etc.; cf. Zaehner, *Zurvan*, 36. The Royal Annals would be even less likely to mention it. The Syriac chronicles, on the other hand, tend to record all possible details about Mānī at this point—e.g., *Chronicon Edessenum*, Guidi, 4: *anno 551 natus est Manes* (nothing else about Ardashēr or Shāhpuhr I); *Chronicon Maroniticum*, Chabot, 47; *Chronicon ad 724*, Chabot, 115. But in spite of Agathias' Syrian bias, there is nothing to show that he ever saw any Syriac chronicles, and while he knows a little about Manichaeism in general (*supra*, on p. 82.83), it seems that he knew nothing of its connection with the reign of Shāhpuhr I.

Again, Agathias, like the Khvadhāynāmāgh tradition, knows Shāhpuhr as a warrior. It is from the *Dēnkard* that we learn of his eclecticism in incorporating foreign material into the Avesta (Book IV, ed. Madan, 412; trans. Zaehner, *Zurvan*, 8). Nothing of this appears in Agathias' account. The same goes for the influence of Shāhpuhr's minister Kartēr in religious matters, of which we know from inscriptional evidence; cf. Zaehner, *Zurvan*, 11ff., Frye, *The Heritage of Persia*, 209, M.-L. Chaumont, "L'inscription de Kartīr à la 'Ka'aba de Zoroastre'," *JA*, 248 (1960), 339ff. (KZ inscr.).

122.40: μηδὲν ὅτιοῦν δράσας . . .

So Firdausī's account (Mohl, V, 317–23) is occupied wholly by speeches, and Ṭabarī's (Nöldeke, 43–46) by details of his birth.

A genealogical table of the first six generations of the Sassanian dynasty is given by Maricq in *Syria*, 35 (1958), 333.

122.41: ὁ μετ' ἐκείνον Οὐαπαράνης . . .

For the form, see Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, 46, note 3.

122.41f.: Vahrām I

Son of Shāhpuhr I, brother of Hormizd—Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, 49, note 1. Ṭabarī (Nöldeke, 47), Ḥamza (*Annales*, Gottwaldt, II, 14), and Firdausī (Mohl, V, 324) make him Hormizd's son. Agathias omits Mānī's end, put by Ṭabarī (Nöldeke, 47), Ḥamza (Gottwaldt, II, 36), and Mas'ūdī (Barbier de Meynard, II, 167f.) under Vahrām I, by Eutychius (Pococke, I, 386)

under Vahrām II. If Sergius reported to Agathias any details from the Annals concerning the religious policy of the kings (or, indeed, if the Annals contained any such material—note that Agathias knows little of Mazdak and nothing at all of Zurvanism), Agathias must have felt it to be unsuitable for inclusion in his excursus. The reign of Vahrām I was a time of orthodox persecution (Ḥamza, *loc. cit.*, and cf. the inscr. of Kartēr at Naqsh-i Rostam); this is probably represented by Ṭabarī's phrase, "Bahrām . . . war . . . ein safter u. milder Mann, so dass die Leute sich bei seiner Thronbesteigung freuten" (Nöldeke, 47). The attitude displayed to the various kings in the Khvadhāynāmagh was dictated entirely by their religious position, i.e., whether or not they were strictly orthodox (see *infra*, on Yazdgard II); this bias is completely lacking in Agathias.

It was in this reign too that war broke out again between Rome and Persia (*Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, Aurel., 35); Agathias tells us nothing of this.

122.42: Vahrām II

Scriptores Historiae Augustae, Carus, 8: in A.D. 283 the Persians were *occupati domestica seditione*. Vahrām's brother Hormizd attempted to set himself up as an independent ruler in the East (Christensen, *L'Iran*², 228).

122.45f.: Σεγάν δὲ σακὰ ἐπεκλήθη . . .

For the custom, see Herzfeld, *Paikuli*, I, 42f., Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, 49, note 2. The campaign commemorated here was that against Hormizd, who was leading the Sacai.

122.54: τῶν Σεγεστανῶν ἔθνος . . .

The place was called Sagistān, the people, the Sacai; hence Σεγεστανῶν is a conflation of the two.

122.57f.: Narseh

Agathias has no details of Narseh's genealogy, which is indeed wrongly given by both Ṭabarī (Nöldeke, 48) and Firdausī (Mohl, V, 333): if he is (as seems certain) the Narseh mentioned in Shāhpuhr KZ (section 48) as king of India, Sagistān, and Turan, he was the son of Shāhpuhr I. From the inscription of Narseh at Paikuli we learn that he gained the throne after a revolt against Vahrām III (Herzfeld, *Paikuli*, I, 94f.). This was evidently suppressed in the Khvadhāynāmagh, as was his unsuccessful war against Diocletian and the peace by which he had to cede Nisibis (Peter Patr., fr. 14 [FHG, IV, 189]; Ps.-Joshua Stylites, Wright, 7).

122.59f.: κληρονομεῖ τοῦ πατρὸς . . . ἰσορροπίας.

Nöldeke (*Ṭabarī*, 416) sees this as a mistake, for the other sources give Hormizd II seven years five months, but are unanimous in allotting to

Narseh nine years. The "mistake" is reversed in Firdausī (Mohl, V, 333f.) and Bīrūnī (Sachau, 127), where both have nine years. Agathias' version is repeated by Mas'ūdī (Barbier de Meynard, II, 174). In view of Firdausī and Bīrūnī, it seems very likely, however, that Narseh and Hormizd *did* rule for the same length of time; Agathias' figure of seven years five months will be the correct one, in view of the calculations of the other reigns.

122.62f.: Σαβῶρ μετὰ τούτους . . .

The Khvadhāynāmagh tradition glosses over the interregnum and the troubles which followed the death of Hormizd II, and there is accordingly nothing of this in Agathias either. The only sign of confusion is Firdausī's statement (Mohl, V, 339): "Le trône resta inoccupé pendant quelque temps et la tête des grands fut remplie de soucis"; Ṭabarī actually assures us (Nöldeke, 51) that Hormizd left no sons and himself designated the unborn Shāhpuhr king. We are left to discover from Zosimus, II.27, John of Antioch, fr. 178 (*FHG*, IV, 605), and Zonaras, XIII.5, that Narseh had, by his *first* wife, three sons, of whom Adhīrnarseh became king—though soon deposed—while the younger two suffered at the hands of Shāhpuhr's guardians, one fleeing to Rome, the other being blinded. But Zonaras can hardly be right in making Shāhpuhr Narseh's son, in view of what follows.

122.65f.: ἦν δὲ τὰ τῶν ὠδίνων ἀμφίβολα . . .

Cf. Eutychius, Pococke, I, 398, though there the wife herself prophesies that the child will be a boy.

122.78f.: τῇ γαστρὶ περιθέντες τὴν κίδαριν . . .

Cf. Firdausī (Mohl, V, 339): "On suspendit audessus de sa tête une couronne." Forty days after the birth "on prepara un trône royal, et les héros aux ceintures d'or suspendirent au-dessus une couronne d'or . . . on plaça cet enfant de quarante jours sur le trône de son glorieux père et au-dessous de la couronne." Nöldeke is wrong in saying (*Ṭabarī*, 51, note 3, and 147) that, according to Firdausī, Shāhpuhr II was born forty days after his father's death. There is in fact some confusion in Firdausī, for all he says (Mohl, V, 338) is that the mourning for Hormizd II, during which the throne was unoccupied, lasted forty days. At some unspecified time (after the throne had been empty "pendant quelque temps"—*ibid.*, 339), the unborn Shāhpuhr was designated king (by supending the crown over the head of his mother), after which "un peu de temps se passa" and Shāhpuhr was born. His actual crowning (*ibid.*, 340) took place when he was forty days old, during the whole of which time the people feasted. Even supposing that the figure of forty days for the interregnum is trustworthy and not a mere doublet of the forty days before the infant Shāhpuhr was crowned, Firdausī allows more than forty days between the death of Hormizd and the actual birth of Shāhpuhr.

124.86f.: κατὰ δὲ τὸν τέταρτον τε καὶ εἰκοστὸν . . . ἐνιαυτὸν . . .

The ceding of Nisibis by Jovian took place in A.D. 363 (A.S. 674)—cf. Ps.-Joshua Stylites, Wright, 7; *Chronicon Edessenum*, Guidi, 5; *Chronicon ad 724*, Chabot, 154. Agathias' date is simply wrong (Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, 410, advocates the correction πεντηκοστόν). But Eutychius, Pococke, I, 486, puts the reign of Jovian in Shāhpuhr's twenty-first year; possibly then this was an early error which did not originate with Agathias.

124.100f.: τὰ μὲν οὖν κατ' ἐκεῖνο τοῦ καιροῦ ξυνεγεχθέντα πολλοῖς ἤδη τῶν προτέρων συγγραφέων ἱστόρηται.

See *supra*, on p. 120.34. We do not know which writers Agathias means, if indeed he *does* mean any specific ones.

The starting point for Agathias' mention of Julian is the loss of Nisibis to Persia, and p. 124.87–99 is told with a strong pro-Nisibis bias. That Agathias was not using Persian material here is evident from the fact that there is nothing about the death of Julian in Firdausī (who mixes up Shāhpuhr I and Shāhpuhr II at this point) or Eutychius, while Ṭabarī's version (Nöldeke, 59) has been shown to come from a sixth-century Syriac romance (Th. Nöldeke, "Über den syrischen Roman von Kaiser Julian," *ZDMG*, 28 [1874], 263f.). Agathias is cited by the chronicle preserved in Par. gr. 1712 and by Cedrenus, Bonn ed., I, 538, for an oracle given to Julian before he set out for the East (cited by Theodoret, *HE*, III.21 [ed. L. Parmentier, 200], and *Graec. aff. cur.*, PG, 83, col. 1069). This must be a mistake, unless it refers simply to this bare mention of Julian on p. 124.90, for there is nothing here about any oracle, and I have argued elsewhere ("Agathias and Cedrenus on Julian," *JRS*, 53 [1963], 91f.) that Agathias would not in any case have used the tendentious account of the apostate Julian which is given by Theodoret and the other ecclesiastical historians. It seems equally unlikely that he owes anything to the hostility to Jovian's peace that we find in Greg. Naz., *Or.*, V.15, or in the nexus Ammianus, XXV.9.1–12, Zosimus, III.30f., *Suda*, s.v. Ἰοβιανός (= John of Antioch, fr. 181 [*FHG*, IV, 606], *Exc. de virt.*, Büttner-Wobst, I, 201.8f.)—see my article in *JRS*, 53 (1963), 93.

Here again we have an episode seen from the *Syrian* viewpoint. Like Ps.-Josh. Styl. (Wright, 7), an early sixth-century writer, Agathias sees the ceding of Nisibis as a turning point, whereas the Western (Greek and Latin) authors are chiefly interested in the fate of Julian. Compare, for the Syrian point of view, the *Chronicon ad 724* (the so-called *Liber Calipharum*), Chabot, 104, where, however, the Christian partiality for Jovian neutralizes so far as possible local hostility to the peace. Here again Agathias departs from his Persian material to look at things from the Syrian side. His vague reference to πολλοῖς τῶν προτέρων συγγραφέων probably means no more than that the death of Julian was a favourite topic; it certainly does not imply that he had bothered to look up any of the authors.

τὰ . . . κατ' ἐκείνο τοῦ καιροῦ ξυνεγενέοντα: Agathias refers vaguely to "what happened at that time"; he does not trouble to give the details, thinking them irrelevant to his purpose (p. 124.101, οὐ . . . ἐνδιατρίβειν σχολή). There is no trace here of the religious *Tendenz* which the subject of Julian attracted in most sources, and it may be that here too Agathias has deliberately excluded religious bias, although it is very likely that Sergius' account was coloured by it, like most of the Syriac chronicles. Agathias tries to avoid references to religious disputes, church history, Christian persecutions, etc., as being out of place in an ostensibly secular and classicizing work. He will however admit political bias, even when it ill accords with the Persian viewpoint of most of the excursus. Cf. 124.97: ξυνθήκας τίθεται ἀγεννεῖς . . . Hostility to the peace made with Jovian was part of the Roman tradition, for patriotic reasons—cf. Ammianus, XXV.7.13, 9.8—but it would have been livelier still in the East itself; see Stein, *Bas-Empire*, I, pt. 2, 507, note 71, for sources. Cf. also the songs of the Antiochenes, *ap. Suda*, s.v. Ἰοβιανός: ἀπέσκωπτον οὖν αὐτὸν (sc. Jovian) ᾠδαῖς καὶ παρωδαῖς καὶ τοῖς καλουμένοις φαμώσοις, διὰ τὴν τοῦ Νισίβιδος προδοσίαν.

Ξυγγραφῶν: Most are discussed by Th. Büttner-Wobst, "Der Tod des Kaisers Julian," *Philologus*, 51 (1892), 561f., also N. Baynes, "The Death of Julian the Apostate in a Christian Legend," *JRS*, 27 (1937), 22f. (= *Byzantine Studies* [London, 1955], 271f.), and M. F. A. Brok, *De perzische Expedite van Keizer Julianus volgens Ammianus Marcellinus* (Gröningen, 1959), 9f. (which omits however the Byzantine chronicle tradition). Add the following minor references: Greg. Naz., *Vit. Athan.*, 27 (PG, 25, col. 209); Rufinus, *HE*, X.37; Anon., *Epit. de Caesaribus*, 43.1–3; Eutrop., X.16.1f., 17.1; Festus, 28.3; *Consul. Const.*, a. 363 (in *Chron. Min.*, I [Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Auct. Ant., 9, 240]); Niceph., *HE*, X.29, 34, 38.

NOTE 1: *Agathias on Shāhpuhr II*

Sergius has evidently abbreviated the account in the Royal Annals (cf. p. 134.294f.), for Agathias does not give us Shāhpuhr's name, which Christensen renders "arracheur d'épaules" (*L'Iran*², 235 and note 2), and which was given to him by reason of the barbarous punishment he inflicted on his Arab prisoners. Nor does he tell us anything of Shāhpuhr's Arab wars (see Ṭabarī, Nöldeke, 53f.). On the other hand, Agathias' silence about all details of the wars with Rome save the ceding of Nisibis is quite in line with the Khvadhāynāmagh tradition, in which this was the only fixed event (cf. Firdausī, Mohl, V, 376). So is his silence on the subject of Shāhpuhr's persecution of Christians, for we know of this largely from the Syrian *Acta* and from the Armenian sources (cf. Labourt, *Le christianisme*, 43f.). Again, we know many details about Shāhpuhr's character from Ammianus, but Agathias, in line with the Persian tradition, gives a completely depersonalized account (cf. Christensen, *L'Iran*², 249f.).

NOTE 2: *Shāhpuhr's sieges of Nisibis*

Except for the ceding of the city by Jovian, Agathias mentions no struggle for Nisibis, either by Shāhpuhr I or Shāhpuhr II.

Ṭabarī (Nöldeke, 31), supported by Eutychius (Pococke, I, 377f.) though not by Firdausī, speaks of a siege of Nisibis lasting for 11 years and undertaken by Shāhpuhr I. But the area of Shāhpuhr I's military activities was stereotyped as "Syria, Cilicia and Cappadocia" (*supra*, p. 139), not Nisibis, and Nöldeke (*Ṭabarī*, 32, note 1) mentioned the possibility that this is a doublet of Shāhpuhr II's attempts. Surely this is correct. For Firdausī too mixes up the two Shāhpuhrs, putting Mānī under Shāhpuhr II (Mohl, V, 379) and making both Shāhpuhrs fight a Roman called Baranousch, who is in the first case a "gardien des frontières," and in the second the Roman Emperor himself, who, on hearing Shāhpuhr's demands, concludes a treaty ceding Nisibis, with the greatest possible equanimity. It was only too likely that the two Shāhpuhrs would indeed be confused. See further Sprengling, *Third Century Iran; Sapor and Kartir*, 86.

124.103f. [*Ardashēr II, Shāhpuhr III, Vahrām IV. Yazdgard I and the story of his guardianship of Theodosius. Vahrām V, Yazdgard II. Pērōz and his death in the Hephthalite campaign.*]

124.103: Ἀρταξήρ ἀδελφὸς ὦν αὐτοῦ ...

Agathias gives us no suspicion of the obscurity of this reign. It is likely that the statement here and in the chronicles that Ardashēr II was the brother of Shāhpuhr II is mistaken and that Ardashēr II was the son of Shāhpuhr Sagānsaa, himself brother (or more probably half-brother, in view of Ṭabarī's firm statement that Hormizd died with no son as yet born) of Shāhpuhr II. The reason for this confusion is obvious. Shāhpuhr Sagānsaa is mentioned in a Middle Persian inscription, *ca.* A.D. 311, for which see R. N. Frye, "The Persepolis Middle Persian Inscriptions from the Time of Shapur II," *Iranian Studies presented to Kaj Barr* (Copenhagen, 1966), 83ff. I owe this genealogy to Professor Frye, as also the suggestion that this Shāhpuhr might be the unnamed son of Hormizd II mentioned in Greek sources (*supra*, on p. 122.62f.). Ps.-Mos. Chor. significantly makes Ardashēr II the son of a Shāhpuhr (Patkanian, "Essai d'une histoire de la dynastie des Sassanides," *JA*, Ser. 6, vol. 7 [1866], 155), and cf. also Eutychius, Pococke, I. 473.

124.104: ἀπρεβίω ...

According to Ṭabarī (Nöldeke, 70), he was dethroned by the nobles—and Firdausī's and Ḥamza's (Gottwaldt, II, 14) story that he abdicated in favour of Shāhpuhr II's young son is probably an attempt to gloss over this, as Nöldeke points out (*Ṭabarī*, 70, note 2). The same happened with his account of the death of Ardashēr's successor—see *infra*. Possibly Agathias is reporting a tradition already contaminated. But cf. on p. 126.146.

124.104f.: ὁ δὲ υἱὸς ὁ τοῦτου, Σαβώρ . . .

τούτου—Ardashēr? In Ṭabarī (Nöldeke, 70), Ḥamza (Gottwaldt, II, 39) and Firdausī (Mohl, V, 388), as well as Eutychius (Pococke, I, 537), he is the son of Shāhpuhr II; so also the relief of Shāhpuhr III with Shāhpuhr II at Tāq-e-Bostān (Christensen, *L'Iran*², 257, fig. 29), where inscriptions secure the identification (Herzfeld, *Paikuli*, I, 124).

Agathias tells us nothing about his death, but according to Ṭabarī (Nöldeke, 71) he was killed with a tent rope by the nobles; the whitewashed version however tells us that a tent rope fell on his head in a gale (Firdausī, Mohl, V, 390; Mas'ūdī, Barbier de Meynard, II, 189).

124.107: ὁ παῖς . . .

Cf. p. 122.45f. Agathias probably presents the true Persian account in making Vahrām IV the son of Shāhpuhr III, as against Eutychius (Pococke, I, 537) and others who make him the son simply of "Shāhpuhr," and Ṭabarī who makes him the son of Shāhpuhr II. See Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, 71, note 2.

124.107: ὃς δὴ καὶ Κέρμασα ἀὼνομάζετο.

Vahrām IV received the name and government of Kermān (Ṭabarī, Nöldeke, 71), where he built a town. *Pace* Rawlinson (*The Seventh Great Oriental Monarchy*, 264), Agathias does not say explicitly that Vahrām was governor of Kermān, but merely that he received the προσηγορία. For further examples of the practice, see Christensen, *L'Iran*², 102, Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, 49, note 2.

Neither the pure Persian tradition nor Agathias tells us anything of the partition of Armenia, placed by Christensen (*L'Iran*², 253) in A.D. 390, in the reign of Vahrām IV (for the dating of this to 387, in the reign of Shāhpuhr III, see Stein, *Bas-Empire*, I, pt. 2, 528, note 89).

124.111: καὶ παρὰ Ῥωμαίοις ὁ μὲν Ἀφρικανός . . .

Agathias might have mentioned Justinian's titles, as he did (inaccurately) at I.4, Keydell, 14.7, but prefers to take his examples from the remote past. It sounds from this as though the practice had been discontinued in his own day (καθάπερ πρότερον . . . ἐπεκλήθη), whereas the reverse was the case. If we are to believe Jordanes (*Get.*, 315–6), it was not confined to the Emperor—*victor et triumphator Iustinianus imperator et consul Belisarius Vandalici Africani Geticique dicentur*. The parallel is not exact, for in Roman practice the general himself, not his son, took the title.

124.112f.: ἐπὶ τούτοις Ἰσδιγέρδης ὁ Σαβώρου . . .

In making Yazdgard the son of Shāhpuhr (II or III?) Agathias agrees with Lazarus of Pharb (Langlois, II, 268) and the Acts of the Council of Seleucia (called by Yazdgard himself [ed. Lamy, 23]), as well as with one branch of the Persian tradition (Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, 73, note 1); Ṭabarī on the other hand (Nöldeke, 72) makes him a son of Vahrām IV, as does Ḥamza (Gottwaldt, II, 39).

124.114f.: Ἀρκάδιον τὸν βασιλέα . . .

Cf. Procopius, *BP*, I.2.1f., then Theophanes, A.M. 5900, Cedrenus, Bonn ed., I, 586, Niceph., *HE*, XIV.1, Zonaras, XIII.22, Barhebraeus, Budge, I, 71. Ḥamza (Gottwaldt, II, 13) also has it. The story is disbelieved by Gibbon, by Güterbock (*Byzanz und Persien in ihren diplomatisch-völkerrechtlichen Beziehungen im Zeitalter Justinians*, 27f.), by P. Sauerbrei ("König Jazdegerd, der Sünder, der Vormund des byzantinischen Kaisers Theodosius des Kleinen," *Festschrift Albert von Bamberg zum 1. Oktober 1905 gewidmet vom Lehrerkollegium des Gymnasiums Ernestinum zu Gotha* [Gotha, 1905], 90ff.), and by Rubin (*Das Zeitalter Justinians*, I, 484, note 745). It is accepted by J. B. Bury, (*History of the Later Roman Empire*, 2nd ed. [New York, 1958], II, 2), by J. Haury (*Zur Beurteilung des Geschichtsschreibers Procopius von Caesarea*, Programm München [Munich, 1896], 21), by Nöldeke (*Ṭabarī*, 74, note 3), by C. Zakrzewski ("Un homme d'état du Bas-Empire: Anthemius," *Eos*, 31 [1928], 426–27), by Christensen (*L'Iran*², 270), and by Stein (*Bas-Empire*, I, 549, note 139). It is confirmed (Bury) or discredited (Rubin) by the parallel story of Cavādh's proposal that Justin I should adopt Chosroes (Proc., *BP*, I.11.2, etc.). Agathias tells us that everyone knew the story; we have no reason to disbelieve him, and if it *was* so widely known it is likely enough that it was true. But it would be true only in the sense that there was some such diplomatic gesture; it certainly did not proceed so far as the adoption of Chosroes by Justin I (on which see A. Vasiliev, *Justin the First*, Dumbarton Oaks Studies, I [Cambridge, Mass., 1950], 265f.). It is interesting for Agathias' method to see that he devotes nearly all his account of Yazdgard I to refuting this story of Procopius', as though he is so pleased at being able to disagree with him (see *infra*, on p. 134.300f.). The disagreement, like most of Agathias' own comments on his material, is made on purely general grounds. It is also absurdly out of proportion in the context, much as his long and detailed account of the death of the Merovingian Theudebert is out of all proportion in his excursus on the Franks (I.4, Keydell, 13f.).

126.120f.: γραφή δέ τινι καὶ λόγοις ἱστορικοῖς . . .

This looks like proof that Agathias did do some research; if so, he got little result from it. It is surprising (if true) that Procopius should be the only author to record the story; one might wonder how exhaustive Agathias' research was.

126.123: ὥς πλεῖστα μεμαθηκότα . . .

An often quoted judgement on Procopius (e.g., Haury–Wirth, Pref., p. vii). But it is not so much for Procopius' learning that he is justly admired as for his personal knowledge of the campaigns he describes (cf. *ibid.*, p. xii f.). Agathias modestly disclaims any learning—and to judge from his citations of earlier historians in this excursus he is not being disingenuous.

126.135: καὶ πρὸς γε τὰ ἐς θεὸν πεπλανημένῳ . . .

Cf. III.12, Keydell, 99.27f.: τὸ δὴ πάντων ἀνοσιώτερον, δόξαν ὀρθὴν πρὸς εὐσέβειαν καὶ τὴν τῶν ἱερῶν ἀπορρήτων σεμνότητα περιφρονῆσαι. πῶς γὰρ οὐ τοῦτο φανούμεθα δρῶντες, εἰ προσχωρήσαιμεν τοῖς τοῦ κρείττονος ἐναντιωτάτοις; IV.2, Keydell, 124.24f.: ἐπὶ τοὺς ἐχθίστους τε καὶ ἀλλοτριωτάτους καὶ πρὸς γε τὰ ἐς θεὸν ἑτερογνώμονας . . . IV.3, Keydell, 125.28f.: ἄνδρα τοσοῦτον, φίλον ὑμῖν καὶ συνήθη . . . καὶ ταῦτά περὶ τὸ κρεῖττον φρονοῦντα. . . These examples come from speeches. The present passage shows that Agathias fully shared the Christian sentiments he put into the mouths of his speakers.

126.143: ἀλλὰ μεμένηκεν ἐς αἰετῶν τε ὦν καὶ εἰρηναῖος . . .

Agathias has been following Procopius' account of the "adoption" (*BP*, I.2.9: [Ἰσδιγέρδης] . . . εἰρήνη τε ἀφθόνῳ χρώμενος διαγέγονεν ἐς Ῥωμαίους τὸν πάντα χρόνον καὶ Θεοδοσίῳ τὴν ἀρχὴν διεσώσατο . . ., and cf. *ibid.*, 8: ὦν καὶ πρότερον ἐπὶ τρόπου μεγαλοφροσύνη διαβόητος ἐς τὰ μάλιστα). The account of Yazdgard I in the Khvadhāynāmagh tradition is very tendentious; he was known as "der Sünder" (Ṭabarī, Nöldeke, 72, etc.), while according to Firdausī (Mohl, V, 395), "toute tendresse et toute justice avaient disparu de son âme" and (*ibid.*, 396) "tous les Mobeds" were "peinés et tourmentés par lui." See Christensen *L'Iran*², 269. The reason for this was that he showed himself (at first, anyway) friendly toward the Christians, so alienating the native clergy. The Christian sources praise him to the skies; cf. Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, 74f., note 3, quoting from J. P. N. Land, *Anecdota Syriaca*, I (Leiden, 1862), 8, a contemporary Syrian source which calls him "der gute und barmherzige König Jazdeger, der christliche, der gesegnete unter den Königen, dessen Andenken zum Segen und dessen zukünftiges Leben noch schöner sein möge als sein früheres; alle Tage that er Gutes den Armen und Elenden." Cf. Labourt, *Le christianisme*, 91f. (with further examples), Nöldeke, *loc. cit.* Even the change in Yazdgard's attitude at the end of his reign (Theodoret, *HE*, V.38) did not erase the memory of his earlier sympathies. But Agathias' praise of Yazdgard surely comes directly from Procopius, his source for the whole reign.

126.146: Ἐκείνου δὲ τεθνηκότος . . .

The Khvadhāynāmagh tradition claims that Yazdgard I was kicked in the heart by a mysterious horse, which then disappeared (Ṭabarī, Nöldeke, 77; Eutychius, Pococke, II, 78; Firdausī, Mohl, V, 418 [a more complicated version]); this is regarded, probably rightly, by Nöldeke (note *ad loc.*) as a cover story invented by the Zoroastrian nobles to hide the fact that Yazdgard was assassinated (so also Christensen, *L'Iran*², 273). Compare the differing versions of the dethronement or abdication of Ardashēr II (see note on p. 124.104) and the death of Shāhpuhr III (see note on p. 124.104f.). It is surely no more than coincidental that Agathias gives no details of the deaths of any of these kings; he is giving an abbreviated ac-

count, and Sergius probably omitted these stories as of no interest to Byzantines. Agathias shows no conception of the Zoroastrian and political *Tendenz* that was later present in the Khvadhāynāmagh, either because Sergius did not appreciate it either, or because it was not yet present in the official record. The latter seems unlikely, however, for Sergius got his information from priests, or at least officials (p. 134.285f.: τοὺς τῶν βασιλικῶν ἀπομνημονευμάτων φρουροὺς τε καὶ ἐπιστάτας), and it is likely enough that he would have been given the version best designed to enhance the reputation of the kings (cf. p. 134.288f.).

126.146f.: Vahrām V

In his brief account Agathias does not allow us to suspect any of the succession difficulties which fill the Khvadhāynāmagh tradition, nor the favor which the Zoroastrian Khvadhāynāmagh showed to this violent persecutor of Christians. The explanation (noted already by Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, 116, note 2) is that Agathias is still following Procopius. Thus p. 126.147–50 is simply a summary of *BP*, I.2.11f., which continues straight on from the story of Yazdgard and Theodosius. According to Procopius, Anatolius, the *magister militum* of Theodosius II, was sent as an ambassador to Vahrām, who was invading Roman territory. He advanced on foot towards the King, who was so struck by this apparent sign of surrender that he at once retreated, soon to conclude a peace agreeing to all Anatolius' terms. In taking this over from Procopius, Agathias also takes over the mistake of putting in the reign of Vahrām V the peace that belongs to that of Yazdgard II (see *infra*).

On the succession, see Christensen, *L'Iran*², 274f. Vahrām had been brought up by Mundīr at Hīra (*Ṭabarī*, Nöldeke, 80, 86; Firdausī, Mohl, V, 399f.); the nobles wanted to exclude from the throne the progeny of Yazdgard "the sinner" (Eutychius, Pococke, II, 81), and succeeded in killing Yazdgard's other son, Shāhpuhr, king of Armenia (Ps.-Mos. Chor., III.56 [Langlois, II, 164]). But Vahrām seized the throne with the aid of an army. The manner of his success is made into a fairy tale by *Ṭabarī*, Firdausī, and Mas'ūdī, while in Eutychius Vahrām simply stands up and proclaims his qualifications. Nothing in Agathias of this.

Once he had achieved the throne, Vahrām became astoundingly popular, assuming the status of a romantic hero—cf. Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, 98, note 3, and see the two hundred pages of adulation in Firdausī, as translated by Mohl. Yet Agathias is quite content to copy out Procopius, giving no hint of the many stories associated with Vahrām V. It is less surprising that he omits to mention his persecution of the Christians and the later treaty with Rome, whereby in 422 he guaranteed toleration of the Christians in Iran, for we hear of it only from Christian writers (Socrates, *HE*, VII.18, Theodoret, *HE*, V.39). But the impression remains that Agathias had only a very abbreviated account to deal with at this stage. Though Vahrām was criticized in Iranian sources (e.g., *Ṭabarī*, Nöldeke, 98), his great reputation

was based on the power he allowed to the nobles and clergy (Christensen, *L'Iran*², 277), and their appreciation must have been reflected in the Annals. If so, then Sergius has drastically curtailed his material here. As with Yazdgard I, Agathias knows nothing of the elaborate stories of Vahrām's death told in the Oriental sources; it is possible, however, that the tales of his having fallen into a ditch while hunting a wild ass are of late origin, for Firdausī records that he died a natural death (Mohl, VI, 62; cf. Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, 103, note 3). On the name Vahrām Gor, see O. Hansen, "Tocharisch-iranische Beziehungen," *ZDMG*, 94 (1940), 162.

126.151 f.: Yazdgard II

Again an abbreviated account. The Khvadhāynāmagh tradition predictably represents this persecutor as mild and clement (Ṭabarī, Nöldeke, 113, and 114, note 1; Christensen, *L'Iran*², 283–89; Labourt, *Le christianisme*, 126f.). The peace which Procopius and Agathias attribute to the reign of Vahrām V (see *supra*) in fact belongs to this reign (Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, 116, note 2).

126.153 f.: Περόζης δὲ μετ' ἐκεῖνον . . .

Yet again no mention of the succession troubles, and no mention at all of Pērōz's brother Hormizd, who preceded him in the royal line and from whom he wrested the kingship (Ṭabarī, Nöldeke, 115, 117; Firdausī, Mohl, VI, 68, where Hormizd's reign is put at one year one month; Eutychius, Pococke, II, 101; Elisiaeus, Langlois, II, 248, where the conflict lasts for two years). Nöldeke distinguishes three versions of the story (*Ṭabarī*, 114, note 2; 117, note 3). The Armenians (cf. Patkanian, in *JA*, Ser. 6, vol. 7 [1866]) make Pērōz complain to the king of the Hephthalites that he has been set aside in favor of his younger brother; this might be designed to cover the true story of an attack by Pērōz on the rightful king, in line with Firdausī's usual adulatory tone.

126.157 f.: οὐ τοσοῦτον, οἶμαι, τῇ ῥώμῃ τῶν δυσμενῶν . . .

According to one of the succession versions, Pērōz fled to the Hephthalites, whose king gave him an army with which he attacked Hormizd and seized the throne (Ṭabarī, Nöldeke, 115; Firdausī, Mohl, VI, 68). Christensen (*L'Iran*², 289f.) rejects the story as a doublet of that of Cavādh (*infra*, p. 155f.).

For the form Νεφθαλίται, cf. Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, 115, note 2; G. Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, 2nd. ed., II (Berlin, 1958), 127; F. Altheim, *Geschichte der Hunnen*, I (Berlin, 1959), 34, 41ff. The form with the N is a Greek variant. Procopius has Ἐφθαλίται (e.g., *BP*, I.3.1) but with Νεφθαλίται as a *varia lectio*. The people were really called Chionites, Hephthalites being the name of the dynasty (R. Ghirshman, *Les Chionites-Hephthalites*, Mémoires de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale du Caire, 80 [Cairo, 1948], 115f.).

126.158f.: The death of Pērōz

Agathias' violent bias against Pērōz (cf. ἀνὴρ τολμητίας μὲν ἄγαν ...) is paralleled by Ps.-Josh. Styl., Wright, 8, and especially by the Armenian writers—Lazarus of Pharb (fifth century), Langlois, II, 259f.; Moses of Kalankatvaci (tenth century), Patkanian, in *JA*, Ser. 6, vol. 7 (1866), 173ff.; Kirakos of Gantzak (thirteenth century), Patkanian, *loc. cit.* Cf. John Catholicus (tenth century), Patkanian, *loc. cit.* Lazarus (chap. 73, Langlois, II, 350f.) emphasizes the magnitude of the disaster in which Pērōz was killed and says of it: "la cause de si grands malheurs et d'une si éclatante défaite est Bérose lui-même," and later (chap. 74) Pērōz is described as "un homme violent, présomptueux et irréfléchi" (exactly the sequence of characteristics ascribed to him by Agathias, p. 126.153–56). Again, Lazarus mentions "la cruauté de Bérose" and "son caractère orgueilleux et capricieux" (Langlois, II, 353). Pērōz threatens the Hephthalite envoys that he will tell his army to bring Hephthalite earth, with which "je comblerai la mer et les fosses des frontières qu'on a creusées entre nous." Lazarus calls this "une réponse orgueilleuse" and comments: "Son coeur était devenu si insensible qu'il ne pouvait comprendre qu'il devait remplir avec les cadavres de ses soldats ce fossé qu'il avait fait creuser pour sa perte et pour celle de toute sa nation."

No such hostility found its way into the Khvadhāynāmagh—indeed, Ṭabarī calls Pērōz "gut und religiös" (Nöldeke, 118), evidently because of his support of the Zoroastrian clergy; it was in the Persian interest, moreover, to minimize as far as possible what was evidently a crushing disaster (Firdausī, Mohl, VI, 78: "aucun des princes n'était plus en vie, excepté Kobad, et cette armée et ce royaume étaient livrés au vent"). Nöldeke rightly says that the story Ṭabarī quotes from "ein anderer Berichterstatter als Hisam," which is full of hostility to Pērōz for the harm which he brought on his people, cannot have been in the Book of Kings (*Ṭabarī*, 121, note 2).

In spite of some superficial resemblances (p. 128.161f., τοῦ πεδίου... —Proc., *BP*, I.4.7, τῷ πεδίῳ, ἣ ἐμελλον Πέρσαι...; cf. I.4.12, οἱ δὲ Πέρσαι ξυνεῖναι τῆς ἐπιβουλῆς οὐδαμῇ ἔχοντες κατὰ κράτος ἐν πεδίῳ λίαν ὑπτίῳ ἐδίωκον...; I.4.14, μέλλοντα ἐς τὸ βάραθρον τοῦτο ἐμπεσεῖσθαι...), it does not seem likely that Agathias used Procopius here. Not only does Procopius have a much fuller and more detailed account of all Pērōz' campaigns, but he lacks the vehement bias shown by Agathias. Procopius moreover repeats at length (I.4.14f.) a story about Pērōz' having flung away his pearl earring so that no one should wear it after him, with full details of what happened to the pearl afterward, of which we hear nothing in Agathias.

Agathias must certainly have *known* Procopius' account, for he is familiar with Procopius' version of the reigns immediately preceding and following that of Pērōz (cf. p. 128.192f., where he explicitly mentions Procopius). But he evidently had some access to the Syrian-Armenian view of Pērōz; it is not impossible that Lazarus of Pharb's account had somehow filtered through to him (cf. Proc., *BP*, I.5.9, ἣ τῶν Ἀρμενίων ἱστορία φησί; I.5.41,

ἡ τῶν Ἀρμενίων συγγραφὴ λέγει—both these are references to the reign of Cavādh). No doubt p. 126.157f. represents Agathias' own comment; but the characterization of Pērōz in ll. 153–56 must have some source. The Iranian sources worked up the ditch story to excuse Pērōz of the shame of utter defeat on equal terms (Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, 125, note 1), but supported as it is by Lazarus, Procopius, and Agathias, as well as the later sources, it may well have some truth in it. That there was a mystery about Pērōz's death is shown by Ps.-Josh. Styl., Wright, 9.

128.164: ὑπὸ τῶν Οὐννων κατεστρατηγμένος.

Agathias tells us only of his last campaign, though the earlier part of the war against the Hephthalites gave rise to some fanciful romanticization (Christensen, *L'Iran*², 294, note 2; cf. *Ṭabarī*, Nöldeke, 129).

128.164f.: Οὐννικὸν γὰρ γένος οἱ Νεφθαλίται.

Proc., *BP*, I.3.1: πρὸς τὸ Οὐννων τῶν Ἐφθαλιτῶν ἔθνος, οὗσπερ λευκοὺς ὀνομάζουσι—no doubt the source of Agathias' information. Cf. also I.3.2: Ἐφθαλίται δὲ Οὐννικὸν μὲν ἔθνος εἰσὶ τε καὶ ὀνομάζονται. Agathias is content not to go into further details; Procopius too, while distinguishing them from other Huns, still calls them by that name (I.3.8, 9, etc.). See Altheim, *Geschichte der Hunnen*, I, 36ff., esp. 38, Moravcsik, *Byzantinoturcica*, II, 200f. The Byzantines knew them as Huns, as did the Syrians (Altheim, *loc. cit.*). While *Ṭabarī* does tell us a certain amount about them (Altheim, *op. cit.*, 40), Agathias gives no details whatever. For earlier bibliography, see Moravcsik, *op. cit.*, I, 69. For an attempt to show a political connection between Byzantium and the Hephthalites in the fifth century, see K. Hannestad, "Les relations de Byzance avec la Transcaucasie et l'Asie centrale aux 5e et 6e siècles," *Byzantion*, 25–27 (1955–57), 421ff.

128.165f. [*Valāsh. Cavādh I, his character and policies, his deposition, and his escape from prison and flight to the Hephthalites. His return to Persia and removal of Zāmāsp. Similarities between Cavādh and Zeno and Julius Nepos. Accession of Chosroes: his greatness. His inglorious death. Agathias' statement of the credentials of his excursus.*]

128.165: Οὐάλας . . . ὁ τούτου ἀδελφός . . .

Omitted by Procopius, who confuses Valāsh with Zāmāsp (*BP*, I.5.2–3; cf. Agathias, p. 128.188). Agathias on the other hand makes no mention of the fact recorded by both Procopius (*BP*, I.4.35) and Lazarus (Langlois, II, 357) that Persia was subject to the Hephthalites for a period set by Procopius at two years. The Iranian tradition, bent on saving face, makes Zarmihr, Valāsh's minister, fight a war with the Hephthalites and recover all the booty, including Pērōz' daughter (*Ṭabarī*, Nöldeke, 130; Firdausī, Mohl, VI, 87); it is quite uncertain whether this was already in the tradi-

tion in Agathias' day. On the subject of the Hephthalite domination see Christensen, *L'Iran*², 297, note 2.

Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, 133, note 4. Only the later sources call Valāsh Pērōz' son; he is called his brother by Lazarus, Langlois, II, 352; Ps.-Josh. Styl., Wright, 12; Proc., *BP*, I.5.2.

128.165f.: ἐπὶ τὴν ἀρχὴν ἀναβάς . . .

Ṭabarī (Nöldeke, 153) makes Cavādh, defeated in the contest for the throne, flee to the Hephthalites. Eutychius (Pococke, II, 126) follows this, but omits Cavādh's flight on his dethronement (Agathias, p. 128.195, see *infra*), while other versions only mention the latter flight (see Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, 133, note 6). Ṭabarī's first flight is surely a doublet of the second.

128.167: οὐ μόνον τῷ πρῶτος εἶναι τοὺς τρόπους καὶ ἥπιος . . .

Another place where Agathias agrees with the Syrian-Armenian tradition (cf. Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, 134, note 2: "Sein Character wird als sanft und friedlich gerühmt von Lazarus [Langlois, II, 352], Josue [Wright, 12] und Agathias"). Christensen, *L'Iran*², 296, note 4, adds Michael the Syrian (Chabot, II, 151). According to Ps.-Josh. Styl., (Wright, 12), Valāsh was hated by the Magi for wanting to build baths (a pollution of the elements), and Nöldeke well comments (*Ṭabarī*, 134, note 5): "Zu dem Hass der Magier stimmt . . . das Lob der Christen."

128.168f.: ὅτι καὶ βραχὺν ἐπεβίω χρόνον.

In fact he was blinded by the nobles and replaced by Cavādh—Ps.-Josh. Styl., Wright, 13; cf. Proc., *BP*, I.6.17, where he is confused with Zāmāsp. Compare Firdausī, Mohl, VI, 94—the great minister Zarmihr "écarta sans violence Balasch du trône."

128.170f.: The reign of Cavādh I

This reign is very fully discussed in Christensen, *Le règne*, F. Altheim and R. Stiehl, *Mazdak und Porphyrius* (Berlin, 1953), O. Klíma, *Mazdak. Geschichte einer sozialen Bewegung im Sassanidischen Persien* (Prague, 1957), and esp. Pigulevskaja, *Les villes*, 195ff. (see also, by the same author, "Le mouvement mazdakite," *Isvestia AN SSSR, Ser. istorii i. filosofii*, 4 (1944). Agathias does not have much that is new to offer on Cavādh, nor does he understand the nature of the Mazdakite movement. It is still important, however, to sort out how much of what he says does actually come from the official record.

128.171f.: πολλοὺς μὲν κατὰ Ῥωμαίων πολέμους . . .

What Agathias does give us is in fact a compound impression gained from his reading of Procopius (e.g., *BP*, I.7) and from his Persian sources. He gives no details of the wars with Byzantium (for which cf. Stein, *Bas-Empire*, II, 93ff., etc.), no doubt because it was his avowed policy not to

cover ground already fully treated by Procopius (cf. Pref., Keydell, 7.23). He includes in his list of such subjects the reign of Cavādh, his capture of Amida and campaigns against Anastasius and Justin I.

128.172: πολλά δὲ κατὰ βαρβάρων τῶν προσοικούντων . . .

Christensen, *L'Iran*², 352. Agathias is surely exaggerating for the sake of symmetry.

128.174: ἦν δὲ ἄρα καὶ πρὸς τὸ ὑπήκοον ἀπηνής

Agathias' hostility is in line with that of Ps.-Josh. Styl., Wright, 13; Procopius on the other hand seems to admire Cavādh (*BP*, I.6.19: ἦν γὰρ ἀγχίνους τε καὶ δραστήριος οὐδενὸς ἥσσον). It seems very likely that Agathias' unfavorable comments here are based entirely on his reading of Procopius, *BP*, I.5.1f.—see below.

128.174f.: καὶ οἷος ἀνακινεῖν τὰ καθεστῶτα . . .

Agathias knows nothing of Mazdak or of the religious motives behind Cavādh's measures; he presents him simply as a restless revolutionary. Procopius (I.5.1) mentions the law described by Agathias; probably Agathias' λέγεται simply refers to Procopius. Ps.-Josh. Styl., in contrast, knows of the religious movement (Wright, 13: [Cavādh] "reestablished the abominable sect of the Magi which is called that of the Zarādushtakān"—for which see Christensen, *L'Iran*², 337; Ṭabari, Nöldeke, 154; Pigulevskaja, *Les villes*, 203). Agathias and Procopius give us an account purged of the true motivation of Cavādh's innovations—his Mazdakite sympathies—but they do not, like Malalas (Bonn ed., 309–310) and Theophanes (A.M. 6016), connect Mazdak with Manichaeism, nor do they make the mistake of some of the later sources which make the *Mazdakites* attack Cavādh, or which put the whole Mazdak affair *after* his restoration, thus destroying the point of his exile. Cf. Christensen, *Le règne*, 39ff., on the confusions in the Oriental sources; it seems clear, however, that the Khvadhāynāmagh must have contained the true (i.e., Mazdakite) reason for Cavādh's exile—cf. Ṭabari, Nöldeke, 141; Eutychius, Pococke, II, 177. According to Christensen, the variations were already present in the Khvadhāynāmagh itself; according to Pigulevskaja (*op. cit.*, 199), they are more likely to have arisen later. If Agathias was simply using Procopius at this point, we cannot use his account as evidence for the contents of the official Persian version or as proof of Cavādh's brutality (so Christensen, *L'Iran*², 337).

128.182f.: χαλεπαινόντων . . . τῶν δυνατῶν . . .

In Procopius it is τὸ πλῆθος (I.5.1). In view however of l. 183, Agathias' ἄπαντες (l. 185) means "all the nobles" (and the clergy too, the two classes who stood to lose by Cavādh's social programme and his heresy—see Christensen, *L'Iran*², 348, who misrepresents Agathias, however). Pigulevskaja emphasises the role of Cavādh as the supporter of a class struggle of

poor against rich (*Les villes*, 206). But Agathias sees him in *moral* terms only; he has no inkling of the religious question or of the social issue. Pigulevskaja argues that Procopius' τὸ πλῆθος must refer to the nobles, in view of what follows in section 3f.; but surely Procopius is as ignorant as Agathias of the real nature of the movement—see S. Mazzarino, “Si può parlare di rivoluzione sociale alla fine del mondo antico?” *Il passaggio dall'antichità al medioevo in Occidente*, Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull' alto medioevo, IX (Spoleto, 1962), 413f.

128.183–85: ἄλλ' οὗτος γὰρ αὐτῷ ὁ θρασυὸς ἐπιβουλῆς . . . αἰτιώτατος γέγονεν.

Unlikely—cf. Christensen, *L'Iran*², 344. Agathias (following Procopius) is struck only by the marriage law. It is no use speculating as to why he did not remark on any of the other measures (so Christensen), for it is clear that he knew of the movement only in the most general terms.

128.186: τῷ ἑνδεκάτῳ ταύτης ἐνιαυτῷ . . .

For the date, see Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, 427f. The eleventh year is in fact the year of Cavādh's *restoration*. With Agathias cf. *Ṭabarī* (Nöldeke, 140), placing his deposition “after ten years.”

128.186f.: ἐς τὸ τῆς Ἀθήνης . . . φρούριον.

Proc., *BP*, I.5.7: ἐν φρουρίῳ καθεῖρξαι ὅπερ τῆς Ἀθήνης καλεῖν νενομίκασιν. If it was really true that it was forbidden to name the prison (Christensen, *L'Iran*², 307, note 4), it is not surprising that the Oriental sources do not tell us where Cavādh was imprisoned. Cf. *Ṭabarī*, Nöldeke, 142, “zu einem Ort, zu dem niemand als sie kommen konnte”; Eutychius, Pococke, II, 176, *loco quodam includentes ubi nemini ipsum adire permissum*. For the place, cf. Christensen, *L'Iran*², 307 and note 4.

128.188: Ζαμάσφην . . .

Called by Procopius Blases, in confusion with Valāsh (*BP*, I.5.2).

128.188f.: καὶ ἄλλως πραότητός τε καὶ δικαιοσύνης . . .

Probably a rhetorical flourish added by Agathias.

128.192f.: εἴτε τῆς γαμετῆς . . . εἴτε καὶ ἄλλῳ . . . τρόπῳ . . .

All the sources agree on Cavādh's imprisonment, except Ps.-Josh. Styl. (Wright, 15), who says that he heard of the plot and fled.

In the Iranian tradition the woman was Cavādh's *sister* (*Ṭabarī*, Nöldeke, 144); the parallel version of Cavādh's escape (coexistent in Proc., *BP*, I.6.3f. with the woman-version) was that he was saved by a friend (called either Siyāvush or Zarmihr), while some sources combine both versions. See Christensen, *L'Iran*², 349, note 4, who concludes from what Agathias says that the story of the woman who somehow saved Cavādh by deceiving the commander of the prison was not in the *Annals* to which Agathias had

access. But Agathias does not tell us what *was* in the official account. Perhaps this is another example of abbreviation by Sergius—if Agathias knew a conspicuously different version we should expect more details of it. But his reservations about simply repeating Procopius' story do suggest that he had some variation in mind—perhaps the version as found in Ṭabari, which is different in detail, though similar in essentials.

130.202: τὴν θυγατέρα κατεγγυᾷ πρὸς γάμον . . .

Proc., *BP*, I.6.10: αὐτῷ τὴν παῖδα γυναῖκα ὁ βασιλεὺς γαμετὴν δίδωσιν . . . We know from Ps.-Josh. Styl. (Wright, 15) that her mother was the daughter of Pērōz, who had been captured by the Hephthalites.

Agathias shows no acquaintance with the story found in the Khvadhāy-nāmagh tradition that while fleeing Cavādh married incognito, left the woman behind, and on his return found that she had given birth to Chosroes (Christensen, *L'Iran*², 350, note 1)—an indication, if such be needed, that the tale is a fable originating only after the reign of the great Chosroes I.

130.209f.: ἐκ μὲν γὰρ βασιλείως . . .

Agathias knows nothing of the story of Cavādh's period as a hostage at the Hephthalite court (only in Ps.-Josh. Styl., Wright, 8).

130.212: ἀνείληφε πάλιν τὴν ἀρχὴν πόνων ἐκτός . . .

Proc., *BP*, I.6.17, Καβάδης οὖν ἐν τοῖς βασιλείοις οὐδενὶ πόνῳ γεγόμενος . . .

130.214: ὁ γὰρ Ζαμάσπης ἐκὼν ἀπέστη τοῦ θάκου . . .

Christensen, *Le règne*, 114; *L'Iran*², 350. Only Elias of Nisibis (*ap.* Barhebraeus, *Chron. Eccl.*, II.22 [Abbeloos and Lamy, III, col. 80]) says that Cavādh killed him. According to Procopius (*BP*, I.6.17) he was blinded; but Procopius is still confusing Zāmāsp with Valāsh and Agathias here, as at p. 128.188, seems to be tacitly correcting him. Some of the later sources follow Agathias' version; others say that Zāmāsp was expelled. In that Agathias' version is the less predictable, it is the more likely to be right.

130.217f.: ὁ δὲ Καβάδης . . .

Henceforth Agathias has nothing new to say; his reason for omitting further details is that it has all been told before by οἱ πάλαι σοφοί (p. 130.223)—a curious phrase when what he means is Procopius. The whole account of Cavādh is interesting, based as it is largely on Procopius; for at p. 134.300f. Agathias tells us explicitly to follow *his* version of the reign of Cavādh in *preference* to Procopius'. Of what is he thinking? He openly corrects Procopius only once—on the story of Cavādh's escape (see on p. 128.192f.)—yet in the vaguest terms and *without* giving an alternative version. It is possible that he is criticizing the Siyāvush story by omission, in which case we cannot apply the *argumentum e silentio* to say that had Agathias disbelieved this story he would have said so (so Christensen, *Le règne*, 94).

Or his claim may refer merely to his implicit correction of Procopius' confusion of Zāmāsp and Valāsh. In any case, his claim to have better information than Procopius about Cavādh is at best very misleading, for he has chosen to take as his example the very reign where he has least that is new to offer. Such an instance of his approach to his source material makes it more than ever essential to sort out exactly what his sources were.

130.225: θαυμάσει γὰρ ἂν τις . . .

Here the section based on the Royal Annals ends, as Agathias signals himself (cf. p. 134.275f.). It is prolonged with a piece about Zeno, followed by a digression on the death of Chosroes, which is chronologically out of place, and finally with a statement of Agathias' credentials as a historian of Persia. What follows about Zeno and Julius Nepos is inspired by Agathias' own speculations on the congruences between Persian and Roman history—part of his attempt to "write up" his subject matter.

130.230f.: ὑπὸ Ἰλλοῦ τε καὶ Βασιλίσκου καὶ Κόνωνος . . .

Agathias' brief mention of the troubles of the Emperor Zeno is sketchy in the extreme, and misleading as well, for it confuses the two occasions on which Illus opposed Zeno. Agathias is clearly only referring to Zeno's dethronement in 475/6; the mention of Conon however belongs to Illus' revolt in 484. He was the bishop of Apamea, sent against Illus by Zeno, who joined the rebel cause. See Candidus, fr. 1 (*FHG*, IV, 136); Joh. Ant., frs. 210f., 214 (*FHG*, IV, 618–21, cf. Mommsen, *Hermes*, 6 [1872], 325f.); Ps.-Josh. Styl., Wright, 9f.; Malal., Bonn ed., 376f.; Stein, *Bas-Empire*, I, 363f., II, 28f. It is even possible that Agathias has confused the two revolts against Zeno with that of Longinus the brother of Zeno against Anastasius in 492, with which Conon was connected (Evagrius, *HE*, III.35; Stein, *Bas-Empire*, II, 82). There was also a Conon who was another brother of Zeno, according to *Suda*, s.v. Λογγίνος, but Agathias surely means the bishop Conon. Whatever his source (and it is quite unclear what it was), he has garbled it by thus lumping together all Zeno's opponents. The dowager Empress Verina, Zeno's mother-in-law, played a leading part in Basiliscus' usurpation, but found that things did not go as she had planned (Stein, *Bas-Empire*, I, 363; cf. II, 28f.).

130.234: οὐ πλέον ἢ ἔτεσι δύο . . .

Malal., Bonn ed., 378, gives two years also, but it was in fact not more than 18 months (Stein, *Bas-Empire*, I, 363).

130.236–132.237: καὶ Νέπως . . . ὁμοίαις ἢ καὶ μείζουσιν . . .

Agathias was not the first to see the similarity between Zeno and Julius Nepos—cf. Malchus, fr. 10 (*FHG*, IV, 119): ἐκ τοῦ Νέπωτος ἀγγελοι [came to Zeno]... δεόμενοι ἅμα ταῖς ἴσαις τῷ Νέπωτι συμφοραῖς χρησαμένῳ συσπυδάσαι προθύμως βασιλείας ἀνάκτησιν . . .

132.240: ... διεφθάρη.

The deposition of Nepos was covered by Malchus (see Phot, *Bibl.*, cod. 78) and Candidus (*ibid.*, cod. 79). We have no way of telling whether Agathias used either of these writers; it would be only natural that he should have read them. For Nepos, see Stein, *Bas-Empire*, I, 396.

132.244f.: τεθνηκός γὰρ τοῦ Καβάδου ...

For the date of Chosroes' accession, see Taqizadeh, in *BSOS*, 9 (1937), 128f., proving that he was crowned 18 August 531; this was before Cavādh's death (Taqizadeh, *loc. cit.*, Stein, *Bas-Empire*, II, 294, note 2). Agathias now goes on, for the sake of continuity, to Chosroes' death. He makes it clear that this is only a brief mention, to round off his excursus; the main account of Chosroes is reserved for later (ll. 247f.). This shows clearly that the *History* as we have it is far short of Agathias' original intentions; he seems to be implying here that he meant to continue it to his own day, whereas what we have goes only as far as 558. Cf. Menander Protector, fr. 1 (*FHG*, IV, 202): ὠρμήθην ἐπὶ τήνδε τὴν συγγραφὴν, ἀρξασθαι μετὰ τὴν ἀποβίωσιν τοῦ Ἀγαθίου, καὶ τῆς ἱστορίας ποιήσασθαι τὴν ἀρχήν.

132.254: οὐδὲ μὴν Ζέρξην ἐκείνον ...

For the comparison with Xerxes, compare George of Pisidia on Chosroes II (*Heracl.*, I.27)—Ζέρξει τε τῷ πρὶν ἀντερίζει. And for Xerxes as the exemplification of ὕβρις, cf. Agathias, II.10, Keydell, 53.32f.

132.255f.: The death of Chosroes

Spring, 579 (Theophylact, III.16.7, Joh. Eph., VI.21, Menander Protector, fr. 55 [*FHG*, IV, 256ff.]). It is put by Taqizadeh about 9th March (*BSOS*, 9 [1937], 128ff.). Cf. Stein, *Studien*, 82, note 6; P. Goubert, *Byzance avant l'Islam*, I (Paris, 1951), 74f.

132.260: Μαυρίκιος δὲ ὁ Παύλου ...

We must assume that Agathias died before the accession of Maurice in 582 (Niebuhr, pref., p. xv), for he gives no hint of Maurice's future destiny. Contrast Theophylact, III.15.17: Μαυρίκιον στρατηγὸν ... τότε δὴ τῶν σωματοφυλάκων τοῦ βασιλέως ἡγούμενον.

132.260f.: ὑπὸ Τιβερίου Κωνσταντίνου τοῦ Ῥωμαίων βασιλέως ...

Cf. Joh. Eph., VI.27, Evagrius, V.19, but for the date (Maurice was appointed before Tiberius actually came to the throne himself) see Stein, *Studien*, 70f., with notes 13 and 17.

132.262: ἐς τὴν Ἀρξιανηνὴν χώραν.

Theophylact, III.14.11, 16.12: Ἀρζανηνή.

132.265f.: Chosroes' retreat

Agathias does not tell us that Chosroes had taken the *offensive* and broken the three-year truce, nor that it was in answer to this that Maurice, after routing the Persian army, was ravaging Arzanene (Stein, *Studien*, 73f.). For l. 265, τὰ ἐν ποσὶν ἐλεηλάτει, see Joh. Eph., VI.15, a colorful account. All this happened before the coronation of Tiberius as Augustus on 26 September 578 (cf. Theophylact, III.16.3–5, Joh. Eph., V.13, Theophanes, A.M. 6070; cf. Stein, *op. cit.*, 86, note 18; Evagrius wrongly dates Chosroes' death immediately after his precipitate retreat in 575).

132.273f.: οὐκ ἐξ μακρὰν καταλύει τὸν βίον . . .

Not until the winter of 578/9 had been spent in negotiating for peace with Tiberius. Compare Menander Protector, fr. 54 (*FHG*, IV, 255): Χοσρόης . . . καταπλεγείς τοῖς συμβεβηκόσι (cf. Agathias, p. 132.269), προφθάσας ἐκπέμπει ὡς τὸν Ῥωμαίων αὐτοκράτορα πρεσβευτήν, . . . Agathias' account is no doubt highly coloured, but not necessarily therefore false. It pleased Baronius as example of divine vengeance on pride (*Annales Ecclesiastici, una cum critica historico-chronologica P. A. Paggi*, X [Lucca, 1741], 347).

134.279f.: ἐκεῖνα μὲν ἑατέον πρὸς τὸ παρόν, . . . ἐπανήξω δέ . . .

See on p. 132.244f.

134.282: ἅπαν μοι τὸ ἐπηγγελμένον, ξυνετελέσθη.

Cf. p. 88.197: ἐγὼ δὲ ἅπάντων τῶν ἐφεξῆς ἀπογόνων . . . τὰ τε ὀνόματα φράσω . . ., and see p. 120.13f.: καιρὸς ἂν εἴη ἐκπληροῦν νῦν τὸ πρότερον ἐπηγγελμένον καὶ τῶν ἐφεξῆς βασιλέων ἐπιμνησθῆναι.

134.283: οἶμαι δὲ ἄγαν ἀληθῆ ταῦτα καθεστάναι . . .

Agathias' own statement of the credentials of his excursus. He makes the same claim for his version of the origin of Ardashēr (p. 88.196), though there he is mistaken. Compare his claim to superiority over Procopius on the reign of Cavādh (p. 134.300f.)—he is mistaken, or at best misleading (see on p. 130.217f.). Evidently Agathias did not suspect that Sergius' information was not quite what it purported to be, nor did he realize that it was in some places contaminated with a Syrian bias. In spite of his section on Iranian religion in Book II, he has no real idea of the role that Zoroastrianism played in the Sassanian state and hence was unlikely to recognize the religious bias in the Annals, nor to miss it when it was absent from the material he had.

134.284: ἐκ τῶν Περσικῶν βίβλων μεταληφθέντα.

Interpreters: Menander Protector, fr. 37 (*FHG*, IV, 240): Ἰάκωβον, ὃς τὰ Περσικά ῥήματα τῇ Ἑλληνίδι φωνῇ διασαφηνίζειν ἠπίστατο, and cf. Proc., *BP*, II.2.3, where a Syriac-Greek interpreter is used for talks between Chosroes

and the ambassadors of Vitigis. In general, D. A. Miller, *Byzantion*, 36 (1966), 449ff. A. Baumstark, "Lucubrationes Syro-Graecae," *Jahrbücher für klassische Philologie*, Suppl. 21 (1894), 368, argued for Syriac for the language of the Royal Annals. But Pahlavī was the official language of the period, of inscriptions, and of the Khvadhāynāmagh when it came to be composed (Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, p. xv, Christensen, *L'Iran*², 59). Syriac was certainly much used as an intermediary language for contact between Persia and the Greek world, but the Annals cannot have been in any language but Sassanian Pahlavī. Agathias in any case explicitly calls the Annals Περσικαὶ βίβλοι, and says that Chosroes had Greek works translated into the *Persian* language (II.28, Appendix A, p. 164.4f.).

134.284f.: Σεργίου γὰρ τοῦ ἑρμηνέως ἐκείσε γενομένου . . .

On Sergius, see Baumstark, "Lucubrationes Syro-Graecae." Sergius *was* very probably a Syrian—no other explanation can account for the Syrian bias in the excursus or for the Seleucid date given for the beginning of the Sassanian dynasty. So Nöldeke, *Ṭabarī*, pp. xvi, 400. For Syrians as the intermediaries between Persia and the West, cf. the instance of Uranius (Agathias II.29—see Appendix A, pp. 164, 166), and Paulus Persa's *De arte logica*, a Syriac version of Aristotle made for Chosroes (Christensen, *L'Iran*², 427, note 4: "nous pourrions supposer que le traité de Paulus a été traduit du syriaque en pahlvi, mais il n'est peut-être pas absolument invraisemblable que Khusro ait su lire le syriaque"). The line went both ways—for example, the lost Indian novel known in an Arab version from the Pahlavī as "Bilauhar and Budhasaf" was the origin, through a Syriac translation of the Pahlavī, of the medieval romance "Barlaam and Joasaph." In post-Arab days also the Persian versions of Euclid, Ptolemy, and other writers were made "non pas directement sur les textes originaux, et il paraît démontré qu'elles furent entreprises sur des traductions syriaques et arabes" (Langlois, *Collection des historiens anciens et modernes de l'Arménie*, I, p. xxviii).

134.285f.: τοὺς τῶν βασιλικῶν ἀπομνημονευμάτων φρουροὺς . . .

Baumstark, "Lucubrationes Syro-Graecae," makes the mistake of supposing that Agathias said that *Sergius* was one of these guardians of the Royal Annals.

134.285: βασιλικῶν ἀπομνημονευμάτων

Cf. pp. 88.197, βασιλείοις διφθέραις, 134.302, τοῖς Περσικοῖς χειρογράφοις. The keeping of Royal Annals had been a Persian custom since Achaemenid days—cf. Herod., VII.100.1, VIII.90.4, cf. *ibid.*, 85.2; Thuc., I.129.3, Diod., II.32.4 (= Ctesias, *FGH Hist*, 688, F 5): τῶν βασιλικῶν διφθέρων, ἐν αἷς οἱ Πέρσαι τὰς παλαιὰς πράξεις κατὰ τινα νόμον εἶχον συντεταγμένας; Ps.-Lucian, *Macrob.*, 14; Esther 2:23, 6:1, 10:2. Compare the ninth-century Syriac commentary on the New Testament by 'Ishōdad of Ḥadatha, on Matth. 2:1 (trans. *ap.*

Gottheil, in *Classical Studies in Honour of Henry Drisler*, 29)—the prophecy about the birth of Christ and the coming of the Magi was written down in the Persian βιβλιοθήκη (archives?) and ὑπομνήματα (chronicles?). Agathias' official material ends with Cavādh; what he says about Chosroes is largely based on his own opinions and observations (see Appendix A). He may or may not have had access to some earlier version of the Khvadhāynāmagh (cf. Nöldeke, *Tabarī*, pp. xv–xvi); but his account agrees so closely in general with the Khvadhāynāmagh tradition represented by the later chroniclers that it is obvious that the Royal Annals and the Khvadhāynāmagh (probably not composed until the reign of Yazdgard III—Christensen, *L'Iran*², 59) were largely identical.

134.294f.: λαβὼν . . . τὰ τε ὀνόματα καὶ τοὺς χρόνους . . .

We have seen that, as Agathias suggests here, Sergius very probably did abbreviate his material himself. There is no telling how far this went. Thus, when Agathias shows no knowledge of a story that appears in the later tradition, we cannot tell whether it was present in the Annals but omitted by Sergius or Agathias, or whether it came in only in the Khvadhāynāmagh or later. When Agathias says however that Sergius took from the Annals only the bare outline (τὰ καιριώτερα), it looks as though they *were* fairly full.

134.300f.: ὥστε εἰ καὶ Προκοπίῳ τῷ ῥήτορι . . .

Cf. on p. 130.217f. It is to be regretted that Agathias is not more explicit—though he must surely have some definite point in mind.

APPENDIX A

AGATHIAS ON CHOSROES

Text

- 126.1 B II. 28. Ἀλλὰ γὰρ βραχέα ἄττα περὶ Χοσρόου διεξελθὼν αὐτίκα ἔγωγε
 ἀνὰ τὰ πρότερα καὶ δὴ ἐπανήξω. ὕμνοῦσι γὰρ αὐτὸν καὶ ἄγανται πέρα
 τῆς ἁξίας, μὴ ὅτι οἱ Πέρσαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἔνιοι τῶν Ῥωμαίων, ὥς λόγων
 ἐραστὴν καὶ φιλοσοφίας τῆς παρ' ἡμῖν ἐς ἄκρον ἐλθόντα, μεταβεβλημένων
 5 αὐτῷ ὑπὸ τοῦ ἐς τὴν Περσίδα φωνῆν τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν συγγραμμάτων.
 2 καὶ τοίνυν φασίν, ὅτι δὴ ὅλον τὸν Σταγειρίτην καταπιὼν εἶη μᾶλλον
 ἢ ὁ ῥήτωρ ὁ Παιανιεύς τὸν Ὀλόρου τῶν τε Πλάτωνος τοῦ Ἀρίστωνος
 ἀναπέπλησται δογμάτων καὶ οὔτε ὁ Τίμαιος αὐτὸν ἀποδράσειεν ἂν, εἰ
 καὶ σφόδρα γραμμικῇ θεωρίᾳ πεποίκιλται καὶ τὰς τῆς φύσεως ἀνιχνεύει
 10 κινήσεις, οὔτε ὁ Φαίδων οὔτε ὁ Γοργίας, οὐ μὲν οὖν οὐδὲ ἄλλος τις τῶν
 γλαφυρῶν τε καὶ ἀγκυλωτέρων διαλόγων, ὅποῖος, οἶμαι, ὁ Παρμενίδης.
 3 ἐγὼ δὲ οὕτως αὐτὸν ἄριστα ἔχειν παιδείας, καὶ ταῦτα τῆς ἀκροτάτης,
 οὐκ ἂν ποτε οἰηθείην. πῶς μὲν γὰρ οἶόν τε ἦν τὸ ἀκραφνὲς ἐκεῖνο τῶν
 παλαιῶν ὀνομάτων καὶ ἐλευθέριον καὶ πρὸς γε τῇ τῶν πραγμάτων
 15 φύσει πρόσφορόν τε καὶ ἐπικαιρότατον ἀγρία τινὶ γλώττῃ καὶ ἀμουσο-
 τάτῃ ἀποσσωθῆναι; 4 πῶς δὲ ἂν ἀνὴρ βασιλείῳ τύφῳ ἐκ παίδων καὶ
 127 B κολακείᾳ πολλῇ γεγανωμένος δίαίτῃν τε λαχὼν ἐς ὃ τι βαρβαρικωτάτην
 καὶ πρὸς | πολέμους αἰεὶ καὶ παρατάξεις ὀρῶσαν, πῶς δὴ οὖν ὧδε βιούς
 ἡμελλε μέγα τι καὶ λόγου ἄξιον ἐν τοῖσδε ἀπόναισθαι τοῖς διδάγμασι καὶ
 20 ἐνασκηθῆναι; 5 εἰ μὲν οὖν ἐπαινοίη τις αὐτόν, ὅτι δὴ βασιλεὺς γε ὦν
 καὶ Πέρσης ἐθνῶν τε τοσούτων καὶ πράξεων μέλον αὐτῷ, ὁ δὲ ἐφίετο
 γοῦν ὁμῶς ἀμῇ γέ πη ἀπογεύεσθαι λόγων καὶ τῇ περὶ ταῦτα γάνυσθαι
 δόξῃ, ξυνεπαινέσαιμι ἂν καὶ ἔγωγε τὸν ἄνδρα καὶ μείζονα θεῖον τῶν
 ἄλλων βαρβάρων. 6 ὅσοι δὲ λίαν αὐτὸν σοφὸν ἀποκαλοῦσι καὶ μονον-
 25 ουχὶ τοὺς ὅποι ποτὲ πεφιλοσοφηκότας ὑπερβαλλόμενον, ὥς καὶ ἀπάσης
 τέχνης τε καὶ ἐπιστήμης τὰς ἀρχὰς καὶ αἰτίας διαγιγνώσκειν, ὅποιον
 τὸν ἄγαν πεπαιδευμένον οἱ ἐκ τοῦ περιπάτου ὀρίζονται, οἱ δὴ οὖν ταῦτα
 οἰόμενοι ἐκείνην ἂν μάλιστα φωραθεῖεν οὐ τῶν ἀληθῶν ἐστοχασμένοι,
 μόνη δὲ τῇ τῶν πολλῶν ἐπόμενοι φήμη.
- 30 29. Ἀνὴρ γὰρ τις Σύρος τὸ γένος, Οὐράνιος ὄνομα, κατὰ τὴν βασι-
 λέως πόλιν ἡλᾶτο, τέχνην μὲν ἐπαγγελλόμενος τὴν ἰατρικὴν μετιέναι,

APPENDIX A

AGATHIAS ON CHOSROES

Translation

I will first say a little about Chosroes and then resume at 126.1 B
 once where I left off. People sing his praises and admire him
 more than he deserves—and not only Persians but some
 Romans too. They claim that he is devoted to literature and
 is very well versed in our philosophy, having had Greek
 works translated for him into the Persian language. It is
 said that he has drunk in more of the Stagirite* than the
 Paianian** did of the son of Olorus*** and that he is full
 of the doctrines of Plato the son of Ariston. The *Timaeus*,
 they say, is not beyond him, even though it is positively
 studded with geometrical theory, and inquires into the move-
 ments of nature, nor is the *Phaedo*, nor the *Gorgias*, nor any
 other of the more subtle and obscure dialogues—the *Par-*
menides, for instance, I suppose. But as for myself, I should
 never imagine that he was so well educated, and in such a
 difficult subject. How, after all, could the purity and nobility
 of the ancient words, so suitable and well adapted to the
 nature of the subject matter, be preserved in an outlandish
 and uncouth language? And how could a man who has been
 cossetted by royal pomp and flattery from childhood, and
 spent his life completely in the barbarian manner, always
 concerned with wars and combat—how could he, after such
 a life, reap any great or worthwhile benefit from these teach-
 ings or be trained in them? If anyone were to praise him on
 the grounds that though a king and a Persian, with such vast
 peoples and great events to concern him, he still desired
 somehow to get a taste of literature and to take pleasure in
 a reputation for it, I should join in the praise of the man my-
 self and rate him higher than any other barbarian. But, as
 for those who call him very learned, almost surpassing every-
 one who has ever practiced philosophy, so that he knows also
 the principles and foundations of every kind of skill and
 learning, like the Peripatetic definition of the fully educated
 man—those who are of this opinion can be convicted of
 missing the truth through following only what the majority
 say.

For a man of Syrian origin, called Uranius, went around 127.15 B
 Byzantium claiming to be a doctor, and boasting (though he

* Aristotle

** Demosthenes

*** Thucydides

τῶν δὲ Ἀριστοτέλους δογμάτων οὐδὲν μὲν ἐς τὸ ἀκριβὲς ἐγίνωσκειν, ἐκομψεύετο δὲ ὡς πλεῖστα εἰδέναι, βρενθυόμενος τῷ δύσερις εἶναι παρὰ τοὺς ξυλλόγους

130.3 B 35 9 ἀλλὰ γὰρ τοιόσδε ὦν ὁ Οὐράνιος ἦκέν ποτε παρὰ τοὺς Πέρσας ὑπὸ Ἀρεοβίνδου τοῦ πρεσβευτοῦ ἀπηγμένος. ἅτε δὲ ἀπατεῶν καὶ κόθορνος καὶ οἶος τὴν οὐκ οὔσαν ἑαυτῷ περιποιεῖν εὐκοσμίαν, αὐτίκα ὁ γε στολὴν μὲν ἡμπύσχετο σεμνοτάτην, ὁποῖαν παρ' ἡμῖν οἱ τῶν λόγων καθηγηταὶ καὶ διδάσκαλοι ἀμφιέννυνται, οὕτω δὲ σοβαρῶς δῆθεν καὶ ἐμβριθεὶ τῷ

40 προσώπῳ ἐσεφοῖτα ὡς τὸν Χοσρόην. 10 ὁ δὲ τῷ παραδόξῳ θεάματι καταπεπληγμένος καὶ ἱερὸν τι εἶναι εἰκάζων τὸ χρῆμα καὶ φιλόσοφον αὐτὸν ὡς ἀληθῶς ὑποτοπήσας (οὕτω γὰρ αὐτοῦ καὶ ὠνομάζετο), ἄσμενός τε εἶδε καὶ φιλοφρόνως ἐδεξιοῦτο. 11 καὶ εἶτα ξυγκαλεσάμενος τοὺς μάγους ἐς λόγους αὐτῷ καθίστατο γενέσεώς τε καὶ φύσεως πέρι καὶ εἰ

45 τόδε τὸ πᾶν ἀτελεύτητον ἔσται, καὶ πότερον μίαν τὴν ἀπάντων ἀρχὴν νομιστέον.

30. Τότε δὴ οὖν ὁ Οὐράνιος καίριον μὲν οὐδὲν ὅτιοῦν ἔλεγεν οὐδέ γε τὴν ἀρχὴν διεννοεῖτο· μόνῳ δὲ τῷ θρασύς τε εἶναι καὶ στωμυλώτατος, καθὰ πού φησιν ὁ ἐν Γοργίᾳ Σωκράτης, „οὐκ εἰδὼς ἐν οὐκ εἰδόσιν” ἐνίκα.

50 2 οὕτω τε εἶλε τὸν βασιλέα ὁ βώμαξ ἐκεῖνος καὶ ἐμπληκτος, ὡς χρημάτων τέ οἱ δω|ρήσασθαι πλῆθος καὶ κοινῆς μεταδοῦναι τραπέζης καὶ ἀπάργασθαι φιλοτησίας, οὕτω τοῦτο ἐπ' ἄλλῳ τῷ γεγεννημένον, ἐπόμενυσθαι τε πολλάκις ἢ μὴν οὐπώποτε τοιόνδε ἄνδρα ἐωρακέναι. 3 καίτοι πρότερον ἀρίστους ὡς ἀληθῶς ἐτεθέατο φιλοσόφους, ἐνθὲνδε ὡς αὐτὸν ἀφικομένους. οὐ πολλῶ γὰρ ἔμπροσθεν Δαμάσκιος ὁ Σύρος καὶ Σιμπλίκιος ὁ

131 B 55 Κίλιξ Εὐλάμιός τε ὁ Φρύξ καὶ Πρισκιανὸς ὁ Λυδὸς Ἑρμείας τε καὶ Διογένης οἱ ἐκ Φοινίκης καὶ Ἰσίδωρος ὁ Γαζαῖος, οὗτοι δὲ οὖν ἅπαντες τὸ ἄκρον ἄωτον, κατὰ τὴν ποιήσιν, τῶν ἐν τῷ καθ' ἡμᾶς χρόνῳ φιλοσοφησάντων, ἐπειδὴ αὐτοὺς ἢ παρὰ Ῥωμαίοις κρατοῦσα ἐπὶ τῷ κρείττονι

60 δόξα οὐκ ἤρεσκεν ᾧοντό τε τὴν Περσικὴν πολιτείαν πολλῶ εἶναι ἀμείνονα, τούτοις δὲ τοῖς ὑπὸ τῶν πολλῶν περιγδομένοις ἀναπεπεισμένοι, ὡς εἶη παρ' ἐκείνοις δικαιοτάτον μὲν τὸ ἄρχον καὶ ὅποιον εἶναι ὁ Πλάτωνος βούλεται λόγος, φιλοσοφίας τε καὶ βασιλείας ἐς ταῦτο ξυνελθούσης, σῶφρον δὲ ἐς τὰ μάλιστα καὶ κόσμιον τὸ κατήκοον, καὶ οὔτε φῶρες

65 χρημάτων οὔτε ἄρπαγες ἀναφύονται, ἀτὰρ οὐδὲ τὴν ἄλλην μετιόντες ἀδικίαν, ἀλλ' εἰ καὶ τι τῶν τιμίων κτημάτων ἐν ὧ τῷ δὴ οὖν χώρῳ ἐρημοτάτῳ καταλειφθείη, ἀφαιρεῖται ὅστις οὐδεὶς τῶν ἐντυγχανόντων, μένει δὲ οὕτω, εἰ καὶ ἀφύλακτον ἦ, σωζόμενον τῷ λελοιπότι, ἔστ' ἂν

had no real knowledge) that he knew all about the works of Aristotle, showing off by his factious attitude in discussions.

[Agathias now accuses Uranius of being a charlatan.]

This was what Uranius was really like. He once went to Persia in the train of Areobindus the envoy. Since he was a cheat and a braggart, the sort who would pretend to virtues he did not possess, he immediately put on a sober and respected style of dress, such as is worn by our literary exponents and teachers, and wearing it, with a pompous and solemn expression on his face, he went to Chosroes. The King was struck by the unexpected sight and imagined that it was something wonderful and that he was really a philosopher (for this was what he called himself). So he was glad to see him and received him kindly. Later he called together the Magi and put them into discussions with him about generation and nature, and whether this universe will last for ever, and whether we should consider that everything has one origin. 130.3 B

On these occasions, then, Uranius said nothing to the point, nor did he even know how to start. But simply by being brazen and by glib talk—as Socrates says in the *Gorgias*, ‘the blind leading the blind’—he convinced them. And that crazy idiot so captivated the King that he gave him a large sum of money, and allowed him to share his table and to enjoy his hospitality, which had never been granted to anyone before. He often swore that he had never seen anyone like him. And yet he had seen really eminent philosophers before who had gone there to see him. Not long before this Damascius the Syrian, Simplicius the Cilician, Eulamius the Phrygian, Priscianus of Lydia, Hermias and Diogenes from Phoenicia, and Isidore of Gaza, all of these, the very flower (to use a poetic term) of the philosophers of our time, because they did not share the view of God prevailing among the Romans and thought that the Persian state was far better—they were persuaded by the very widespread tale that the Persian government was supremely just, the union of philosophy and kingship as in the writing of Plato, and the people disciplined and orderly, that there are no thieves or robbers among them, not do they practice any other sort of crime, and that even if some precious object is left in a lonely place, no one who comes by will steal it, so that it remains safe, even if it is unguarded, for the man who left it there to return. 130.17 B

- 132 B 70 ἐπανήκοι· 4 τούτοις δὴ οὖν ὡς ἀληθέσιν ἀρθέντες καὶ πρὸς γε ἀπειρη-
 μένον αὐτοῖς ἐκ τῶν νόμων ἀδεῶς ἐνταῦθα ἐμπολιτεύεσθαι, ὡς τῷ καθε-
 στῶτι οὐχ ἐπομένοις, οἱ δὲ αὐτίκα ἀπιόντες ὥχοντο ἐς ἄλλοδαπά καὶ
 ἄμικτα ἦθη, ὡς ἐκέισε τὸ λοιπὸν βιωσόμενοι. 5 πρῶτα μὲν οὖν τοὺς
 ἐν τέλει ἀλαζόνας μάλα εὐρόντες καὶ πέρα τοῦ δέοντος ἐξωγκωμένους
 75 ἐβδελύττοντο γε αὐτοὺς καὶ ἐκάκιζον· ἔπειτα δὲ ἐώρων, ὡς τοιχωρύχοι
 τε πολλοὶ καὶ λωποδύται οἱ μὲν ἡλίσκοντο, οἱ δὲ καὶ διελάνθανον, ἅπαν
 τε εἶδος ἀδικίας ἡμαρτάνετο. 6 καὶ γὰρ οἱ δυνατοὶ τοὺς ἐλάττονας λυ-
 μαίνονται ὡμότητί τε πολλῇ χρῶνται κατ' ἀλλήλων καὶ ἀπανθρωπίᾳ.
 καὶ τὸ δὴ πάντων παραλογώτερον· ἐξὸν γὰρ ἐκάστῳ μυρίας ὅσας
 ἄγεσθαι γαμετὰς καὶ τοίνυν ἀγομένοις, ἀλλὰ μοιχεῖαι γε ὅμως τολμῶνται.
 80 7 τούτων δὴ οὖν ἀπάντων ἕκατι οἱ φιλόσοφοι ἐδυσφόρουν καὶ σφᾶς
 αὐτοὺς ἡτιῶντο τῆς μεταστάσεως.

31. Ἐπεὶ δὲ καὶ τῷ βασιλεῖ διαλεχθέντες ἐπεύσθησαν τῆς ἐλπίδος,
 ἄνδρα εὐρόντες φιλοσοφεῖν μὲν φρυαττόμενον, οὐδὲν δὲ ὅ τι καὶ ἐπαίοντα
 τῶν αἰπυτέρων, ὅτι τε αὐτοῖς οὐδὲ τῆς δόξης ἐκοινώνει, ἕτερα δὲ ἅττα
 85 ἐνόμιζεν, ὅποια ἤδη μοι εἴρηται, τὴν τε τῶν μίξεων κακοδαιμονίαν οὐκ
 ἐνεγκόντες, ὡς τάχιστα ἐπανήεσαν. 2 καίτοι ἔστεργε τε αὐτοὺς ἐκεῖνος
 καὶ μένειν ἤξιον, οἱ δὲ ἄμεινον εἶναι σφίσιν ἡγοῦντο ἐπιβάντες μόνον |
 133 B τῶν Ῥωμαϊκῶν ὀρίων αὐτίκα, οὕτω παρασχόν, καὶ τεθνάναι ἢ μένοντες
 παρὰ Πέρσαις τῶν μεγίστων γερώων μεταλαγχάνειν. οὕτω τε ἅπαντες
 90 οἴκαδε ἀπενόστησαν, χαίρειν εἰπόντες τῇ τοῦ βαρβάρου φιλοξενίᾳ.
 3 ἀπώναντο δὲ ὅμως τῆς ἐκδημίας, οὐκ ἐν βραχεὶ τι καὶ ἡμελημένῳ, ἀλλ'
 ὄθεν αὐτοῖς ὁ ἐφεξῆς βίος ἐς τὸ θυμῆρές τε καὶ ἡδιστον ἀπετελεύτησεν.
 4 ἐπειδὴ γὰρ κατ' ἐκεῖνο τοῦ χρόνου Ῥωμαῖοι τε καὶ Πέρσαι σπονδὰς
 ἔθεντο καὶ ξυνθήκας, μέρος ὑπῆρχε τῶν κατ' αὐτὰς ἀναγεγραμμένων
 95 τὸ δεῖν ἐκείνους τοὺς ἄνδρας ἐς τὰ σφέτερα ἦθη κατιόντας βιοτεύειν
 ἀδεῶς τὸ λοιπὸν ἐφ' ἑαυτοῖς, οὐδὲν ὅτιοῦν πέρα τῶν δοκούντων φρονεῖν
 ἢ μεταβάλλειν τὴν πατρώαν δόξαν ἀναγκαζομένους. οὐ γὰρ ἀνῆκεν ὁ
 Χοσρόης μὴ οὐχὶ καὶ ἐπὶ τῷδε συστῆναι καὶ κρατεῖν τὴν ἐκεχειρίαν . . .

- 135.4 B 100 32. Τούτων δὲ τῶν ἀνδρῶν ἐς πείραν ἐλθὼν ὁ Χοσρόης ὅμως τὸν
 Οὐράνιον πλεον ἀγάμενος ἦν καὶ ἐπόθει. αἴτιον δὲ τούτου, ὅπερ, οἶμαι,
 φύσει τῷ γένει πρόσεστι τῷ ἀνθρωπεύει. πεφύκαμεν γὰρ ἅπαντες τὰ
 μὲν καθ' αὐτοὺς καὶ παραπλήσια φίλα ἡγεῖσθαι καὶ κάλλιστα, ἀλεείναι

So, therefore, they thought that this was true and were inspired by it, and besides, they had been forbidden by law to live here in security, since they did not subscribe to the existing order, so they left forthwith for a foreign and wholly alien people, meaning to live there for the rest of their lives. First, finding that those in authority were very proud and full of more self-importance than their position warranted, they were disgusted and turned to abuse. Then they saw that there were many burglars and thieves, some who were caught but many who escaped, and that every kind of crime was being committed. The powerful abuse the weak and employ every sort of cruelty and inhumanity against each other. And what is the strangest of all, though every man can have countless wives, and does, adultery is still committed. So for all these reasons the philosophers were upset and regretted their emigration.

They were cheated of their hopes after conversations with the King, also, for they found a man with pretensions to philosophy but with not even an acquaintance with its subtleties, and discovered moreover that he did not even share their opinions, and had certain other habits, as I have described. They could not endure the unhappy marriage situation either, and they therefore returned as soon as they could. Yet the King liked them, and asked them to stay, but they thought that it would be better if they could only cross the boundaries into Roman territory and die at once, if this should happen, than remain in Persia and attain the highest possible honors. So they all returned home, bidding farewell to the King's hospitality. But they benefited from their stay abroad in an important and conspicuous way, such that their life from then on ended in the most pleasant and agreeable manner. For, when at about this time the Romans and the Persians made a peace treaty, there was a clause in the agreement which stipulated that these men should be allowed to return to their own country and live there henceforth in safety, without being forced to adopt opinions which they did not hold, or to change their own faith, For Chosroes would only settle and ratify the peace on these terms . . .

132.14 B

And though he had been acquainted with these men, Chosroes still admired and sought out Uranius more. The reason for this, I think, is inherent in human nature. We all think, that what is most like ourselves is desirable and preferable

135.4 B

- δὲ καὶ ἐκτρέπεσθαι τὸ ὑπερβάλλον. 2 τοιγάρτοι καὶ ἐνταῦθά οἱ ἐπανελ-
 105 θόντι γράμματά τε κεχαρισμένα ἔστελλε καὶ διδασκάλῳ ἐχρῆτο. ὁ δὲ
 οὐκέτι ἐφαίνετο ἀνεκτός, βρενθυόμενος τῇ τοῦ βασιλέως φιλίᾳ, ὡς καὶ
 ἀποκναίνειν ἅπαντας ἔν τε τοῖς ξυμποσίοις καὶ ἀνὰ τοὺς συλλόγους, μηδὲν
 τι ἕτερον ἄδειν ἐθέλων ἢ ὅπως αὐτὸν ἐγέραιρεν ὁ Χοσρόης καὶ ὅποια
 ἅττα διελεγέσθην. 3 καὶ πολλῶ σκαιότερος ἐπανῆκεν ἡμῖν ὁ γενναῖος
 110 ἢ πάλαι ὑπῆρχεν, ὥσπερ τοῦδε ἔνεκα μόνου τοσαύτην ὁδὸν ἀναμετρήσας.
 ὁμῶς, καίτοι φαυλότατός γε ὢν καὶ καταγέλαστος, ἀλλὰ τῷ πολλάκις
 ὑμνεῖν τὸν βάρβαρον καὶ δι' ἐπαίνου ποιεῖσθαι αὐτὸς δὴ πού κατὰ τὸ
 μᾶλλον ἔπεισε τοὺς πολλούς, ὡς εἶη σφόδρα πεπαιδευμένος. 4 οἱ γὰρ
 ἀταλαιπώρως ἅπαντα προσιέμενοι καὶ ἀμφὶ ταῦτα δὴ τὰ ξένα καὶ
 115 παραλογώτερα τῶν ἀκουσμάτων διακεχηνότες ῥαδίως ὑπήγοντο ἐπικομ-
 136 B πάζοντί τε αὐτῷ καὶ σεμνολογούμενῳ, μήτε ὅστις | ὁ ἐπαινῶν μήτε
 ὄντινα ἐπαινοίη καὶ ἐφ' ὅτῳ, διασκοποῦντες. 5 ἔς μὲν γὰρ στρατευ-
 μάτων παρασκευὴν καὶ ὅπλων εὐκοσμίαν καὶ τὸ διὰ παντὸς ἐν τοῖς
 πολέμοις διαπονεῖσθαι δικαίως ἂν τις θαυμάσειε τὸν Χοσρόην, ὡς οὔτε
 120 ὄκνῳ εἴξαντα πώποτε οὔτε τῇ τοῦ γήρως ἀσθενείᾳ· λόγων δὲ πέρι καὶ
 φιλοσοφίας τοιοῦτον αὐτὸν ἡγητέον, ὅποιον εἶναι εἰκὸς ἀνδρα ξυνόμιλόν
 τε καὶ ἀκροατὴν Οὐρανίου ἐκείνου ἀποδεδειγμένον. |

and we shun and avoid anything better. So even when he returned here he sent him grateful letters and regarded him as his teacher. But Uranius then became unendurable, boasting of his friendship with the King enough to wear everyone out at parties and in discussions. He would talk of nothing else but how Chosroes liked him, and what they had said to each other. The fine fellow came back even more of a fool than he was before, just as if he had gone for that express purpose. But even though he was despicable and ridiculous, nevertheless, by constantly singing the praises of the barbarian, he succeeded in persuading the majority even more that he was very learned. Those who accept everything too easily and are always open for such strange and remarkable stories as this, were easily convinced by his boasts and his pretensions, and did not enquire who it was who was doing the praising, nor who was being praised, and for what. As far as military organization and armaments are concerned, and constant exercise in war, Chosroes can be justly admired for never yielding to fear or to the weakness of old age. But for literature and philosophy, he must be considered as revealed to me just like anyone would be who was an associate and hearer of that fellow Uranius.

APPENDIX A

AGATHIAS ON CHOSROES

Commentary

p. 164f. [*Chosroes' pretensions to philosophy: Greek works translated. Agathias' opinions of this. Description of Uranius and his tales about Chosroes. Uranius' trip to Persia and his reception by Chosroes. The expedition of the seven philosophers contrasted with this. Description of their visit and their impressions of Persia. The lawlessness they found there. Chosroes prefers Uranius.*]

It is worth looking at Agathias' section on Chosroes, for it contains much of interest. It must be stated first, however, that it is *not* (though of course Agathias does not mark any break) based on the Annals. On the contrary, it is a set piece designed to make the most of Agathias' personal information about Uranius and the Athenian philosophers who went to Persia after the closure of their school in 529. It is not a complete picture of Chosroes; that was to be reserved for later, as Agathias says (p. 132.247f.). Nor is it really part of the first Persian excursus, which ends most emphatically at p. 88.217; it is itself an appendix and can most conveniently be treated in one.

164.2: ὕμνοῦσι γὰρ αὐτόν . . .

Chosroes' long reign, only just over when Agathias wrote Book IV, was one of the most brilliant in Sassanian history—cf. p. 132.251f.: γέγονεν ὅποῖος οὕτω πρότερον ἄλλος τῶν παρὰ Πέρσαις βασιλευκότων ἀναδέδεικται—and he went down in legend as the type of the just king (Christensen, *L'Iran*², 374f.). The Athenian philosophers saw him as a philosopher king, at least before they went to Persia and saw for themselves, as Agathias goes on to describe.

164.4: καὶ φιλοσοφίας τῆς παρ' ἡμῖν ἐς ἄκρον ἐλθόντα . . .

Clearly this section was written while Chosroes was still alive. Agathias uses the present tense throughout, and the length and vehemence which he devotes to his attempt to discredit Chosroes as a philosopher surely suggests that he was combating a current opinion about a living man. If the composition of the *History* was spread over a considerable period, as is likely, it would be only natural that Book II was written well before Book IV, where Agathias describes Chosroes' death.

The *Dēnkard* represents Chosroes as a xenophobe and a persecutor of heretics—hence Zaehner, *Zurvan*, 47f., attributes his philhellenism to a later stage in his reign. Certainly his suppression of the Mazdakites, which

won him his reputation for orthodox zeal, came early (actually in the reign of Cavādh, following Malalas, Bonn ed., 444, against the Khvadhāynāmagh tradition, which puts the final blood-bath in Chosroes' own reign—see Klíma, *Mazdak*, 253f., Christensen, *L'Iran*², 360f.); but his kindly reception of the Athenian philosophers (see *infra*) also came right at the beginning of the reign, for the Eternal Peace, by the terms of which they returned to Constantinople, was made in 532 (Stein, *Bas-Empire*, II, 294). We have several examples of the breadth of Chosroes' sympathies. According to Procopius (*BG*, IV.10.11), for instance, he kept a Palestinian physician. He had Aristotle translated (see *supra*), and possibly other Greek medical and logical works as well as the dialogues of Plato which Agathias mentions (see *infra*; for the other treatises, see J. G. Wenrich, *De auctorum graecorum versionibus et commentariis syriacis, arabicis, persicisque commentatio* (Leipzig, 1842), 63f., and cf. Duchesne-Guillemin, *La religion*, 290. The Pahlavī translation of the Psalms perhaps dates from this reign (Christensen, *L'Iran*², 427), and Chosroes encouraged the importation of Indian works (A. Christensen, *Les gestes des rois dans les traditions de l'Iran antique* [Paris, 1936], chap. II; *L'Iran*², 429). John of Ephesus, though biased, is evidently reporting the truth when he describes him (VI.20) as fond of reading the religious books of all creeds, as well as philosophy.

According to Agathias, Uranius (see *infra*, on p. 164.30f.) was putting about in Constantinople the tale that Chosroes was a really learned philosopher (cf. p. 170.111f.). But this belief was current before Uranius went to Persia with Areobindus (in the early 530's—cf. Stein, *Bas-Empire*, II, 551, note 1), for the philosophers chose to go to Persia on the closure of the pagan schools in 529 (*infra*, on p. 166.55f.) because they had heard already of Chosroes' promise as a philosopher king. But Chosroes did not come to the throne till 531. Unless Agathias' chronology is at fault, it would seem that Chosroes' fame had reached the West even before he succeeded, for the hopes of the philosophers (p. 166.62f.) could hardly refer to Cavādh, with his notorious wars and incursions into imperial territory. One must assume that the philosophers had not heard of the blood-bath with which Chosroes put an end to the Mazdakites (Christensen, *L'Iran*², 360).

Suolahti (in *Studia Orientalia*, 13 [1947], 6) calls Agathias' account of the experiences of the philosophers (II.30, pp. 166, 168) "Byzantine market gossip." But to judge from what Agathias tells us about Uranius, Byzantine market gossip would support the tales of the "philosopher-king" (cf. p. 166.61: τοῖς ὑπὸ τῶν πολλῶν περιφερόμενοις), and would hardly have been sympathetic to the Athenian philosophers who were driven from their School as pagans. Agathias must have known one of the philosophers but found that Uranius, instead of those whom he considered the real scholars (p. 166.54), was being believed. This is his attempt to set the record straight. Incidentally he reveals both his real hostility to Persia and a surprising tendency to sympathize with a group of notorious pagans. See my *Agathias*, chaps. IX and X.

164.4f.: μεταβεβλημένων αὐτῷ . . .

Rawlinson, *The Seventh Great Oriental Monarchy*, 448, note 5, simply accepts Agathias' list at face value. I prefer to suspect that Agathias was airing his knowledge of Plato.

164.13: οὐκ ἂν ποτε οἰηθείην.

Agathias' reasons for disbelieving the tales of Chosroes' learning are based not only on his trust in the informed opinion of the philosophers, but also on prejudice and hostility toward barbarians as such (cf. I.2, Keydell, 11, on the Franks, whom he is surprised to find even approximately civilized; I.16, Keydell, 30f., on Fulcaris the Erul; IV.1, Keydell, 123, on the Lazi). He considers the Persian language ἄγρια καὶ ἀμουσοτάτη (p. 164.15f.), Persian names unpleasant (p. 88.210), and the first two Sassanian kings μιᾶρῶ . . . ἄμφω καὶ ἄδικωτάτω (IV.23, p. 120.8f.). This is a good indication of what Agathias really thought of the people he describes at such length. For this anti-barbarian attitude, see K. Lechner, *Hellenen und Barbaren im Weltbild der Byzantiner*, Diss. München (Munich, 1954), 84f., regarding this passage as "programmatisch für die Auffassung der ganzen byzantinischen Epoche." Agathias can make allowances for the Christian and orthodox Franks (*loc. cit.*), but not for Chosroes, great king though he is. He found the same hostility to Chosroes in Procopius (*BP*, I.23.1, cf. *Anecd.*, 18.29—see Christensen, *L'Iran*², 379).

164.20: εἰ μὲν οὖν ἐπαινοίη τις αὐτόν . . .

At first sight a more imaginative approach on Agathias' part, but he refuses to give Chosroes any but the most patronizing credit, even for mere effort.

164.30–166.46: Uranius

A large part of Agathias' scorn for Chosroes stems simply from the fact that he was taken in, as Agathias implies, by this pseudo-philosopher for whom Agathias had such a dislike. So great was his ire against Uranius that he was prepared to condemn Chosroes solely for daring to approve of him. Yet the picture he gives us of Chosroes and the "Magi" debating, on the instigation of Uranius, about γενέσεώς τε καὶ φύσεως . . . καὶ εἰ τόδε τὸ πᾶν ἀτελεύτητον ἔσται, καὶ πότερον μίαν τὴν ἀπάντων ἀρχὴν νομιστέον (p. 166.44f.) is very diverting, even if it does lead Agathias to misrepresent him. The section on Uranius has interesting implications for Agathias' religious and philosophical outlook in general, for which see my *Agathias*, chap. IX. Pp. 164.30f. and 166.35f. appear in *Suda*, s.v. Οὐράνιος. He is identified by Jacoby (*FGrHist*, 675) with a Uranius mentioned by Stephanus of Byzantium and Damascius as the author of a history of the Arabs. It would be nice to suppose that Agathias' Uranius was the Uranius Damascius knew (see *infra*), though Agathias tells us he was a doctor (p. 164.31); if he was really the author of a history, we might have expected Agathias

to mention it with as much scorn as he shows for his philosophical pretensions.

166.55f.: οὐ πολλῶ γὰρ ἔμπροσθεν . . .

Justinian closed the School at Athens in 529 as part of his general prohibition on pagan teaching (Malal., Bonn ed., 451). The Eternal Peace was made in Sept. 532 (Proc., *BP*, I.22.17; for the date, cf. Stein, *Bas-Empire*, II, 295, note 1) and Chosroes came to the throne in August 531 (Taqizadeh, in *BSOS*, 9 [1937], 128ff.). If therefore Agathias means by what he says at p. 166.61f. to imply that the philosophers were taken in by stories about Chosroes himself, and not simply that they thought Persia a better place in general, only one year can be allowed for their expedition and their disillusionment. See Bury, *History of the Later Roman Empire*, 2nd ed., II, 370. More probably, though, they left immediately after Justinian's action. For the whole subject, see now Alan Cameron, "The Last Days of the Academy at Athens," *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society*, 195 (1969), 7ff.

166.55f.: Δαμάσκιος ὁ Σύρος καὶ Σιμπλίκιος ὁ Κίλιξ . . .

Quoted by *Suda*, s.v. πρέσβεις. Agathias is our only source for the journey of the philosophers and for the details about Chosroes' enthusiasm for them as shown in his stipulations about the Peace (p. 168.93f.). We can surely accept what he says, for he seems to have a detailed knowledge of the whole affair such as can only have come from information from one of the philosophers themselves (so E. Zeller, *Die Philosophie der Griechen in ihrer Entwicklung dargestellt*, 5th ed., vol. III, pt. 2 [Leipzig, 1923], 916, note 3 [Damascius]; P. Tannery, "Sur la période finale de la philosophie grecque," *Mémoires scientifiques publiées par J. L. Heiberg*, No. 7, 1880-1904 [Toulouse-Paris, 1925], 238). Agathias does indeed include a poem by Damascius in his *Cycle* of epigrams (*Anth. Pal.*, VII.553) and there are slight indications that he was familiar with Damascius' outlook if not his actual writings (see my *Agathias*, 101). But Damascius' dates (for which see W. Kroll, *RE*, IV, s.v. "Damaskios") make it unlikely that Agathias could ever have met him. Simplicius is a more likely source for the information about the Persian journey. He was a younger man than Damascius (his major works were written after the return from Persia), and there are links between Agathias' *History* and his commentary on the *Encheiridion* of Epictetus (*Agathias*, 100). This is the more interesting in that this commentary very probably dates from the time between Justinian's edict and the subsequent removal of the philosophers to Persia; it alludes in oblique terms to the situation in which the Neoplatonists found themselves (esp. 153 and 332 [ed. Dübner, 138]). Simplicius chose to write on Epictetus because he too was a philosopher oppressed by tyranny (153); the message of Simplicius' commentary is that the sixth-century Neoplatonists must follow his example. Not only therefore is this connection with

the Athenian philosophers interesting on the part of one who while at Alexandria had surely come under the influence of John Philoponus, the Christian rival of Simplicius (see *Agathias*, 102, 114f.); it also guarantees the authenticity of the information in this passage.

Though we know no details of the subsequent lives of the philosophers, two of them wrote works in which they drew on their experiences (Priscianus, *Solutiones eorum de quibus disputavit Chosroes Persarum rex*, and Damascius, *Dubitationes et Solutiones*, on which, however, see p. 98, *supra*). It is clear that Chosroes' fame as an amateur of philosophy did not originate only with this visit. But their reports, even though hostile, must have done much to spread this image, so that Agathias can refer to it as though everyone knew it. Procopius certainly did, and he shared the hostility also (*Anecd.*, 18.29).

168.62f.: πρῶτα μὲν οὖν τοὺς ἐν τέλει . . .

We must suppose that this hostile picture of Persian society also came from the philosophers themselves. This was the very beginning of Chosroes' reign, when the state was still suffering from the evils left by the Mazdakite revolution and its bloody suppression. The new King had not had time to embark on his programme of restoring the status quo after the social upheavals and there were still succession problems to be settled (cf. *Proc.*, *BP*, I.23). In such a situation the philosophers could hardly expect an ideal milieu for philosophical study. And, as Christensen says, they were too much bound by their own preconceptions to understand an alien way of life (*L'Iran*², 439). Persian customs shocked them; they expected a Platonic philosopher-king in the East, and when they found only an Oriental monarch with a taste for philosophy they could not adjust their ideas accordingly. Agathias' own approach is the same. It is the traditional approach of Hellene to barbarian, and it prevented Agathias from reaching any real understanding of the people he is describing.

170.106f.: ὁ δὲ οὐκέτι ἐφαίνετο ἀνεκτός . . .

Is this Agathias' personal grudge against Uranius? Simply that he had been bored by his constant praises of Chosroes? No doubt Agathias felt that he was providing a much-needed antidote.

APPENDIX B

THE SOURCE OF ZONARAS, XII.23

Zonaras, XII.23 (Bonn ed., II, 594.15f.), must surely be taken together with p. 596.4f., by reason of its similarity of subject matter and tone; the latter passage is strikingly similar to what Agathias says on Shāhpuhr I (my note

ad loc., p. 141, *supra*). Where then did Zonaras find an account of Shāhpuhr I which utilized Agathias? In view of the *topos* of valleys being filled with corpses, the resemblance with Agathias could of course be coincidental; I do not believe that it is, however, since there are other passages in this context in Zonaras which certainly come ultimately from Agathias (see *infra*), and because Zonaras' version of the corpse anecdote looks suspiciously like a "working-up" of Agathias', for he makes Shāhpuhr actually order prisoners to be killed for the very purpose of filling up the valleys and levelling the road for his army, whereas Agathias' version simply regards the corpses as the result of his wholesale slaughter of his victims. I have argued already (p. 100, *supra*, and in my article in *CQ*, N.S., 14 [1964], 82f.) that Zonaras did not go direct to Agathias for the founding of the Sassanian dynasty, and another brief allusion to the early Sassanians in Zonaras supports this view. At. XII.31, Bonn ed., 616.5, he says: οὐ πρόσθεν ἢ τῆς ἱστορίας συγγραφῆ ἐμνημόνευσεν ὡς αὖθις Πέρσαις ἀνανεωσαμένους τὴν βασιλείαν ..., which looks like another piece of Agathias—II.25, p. 86.160: αὖθις τοῖς Πέρσαις τὴν σφετέραν ἀνενεώσατο βασιλείαν. But the use of the word ἀνανεωσαμένους does not guarantee that Agathias himself was the source, for immediately afterward Zonaras uses the mistaken form Οὐαραράκης, which he has in common with Syncellus (Bonn ed., 678.13, Οὐράκης, and 722.3), as against Agathias' Οὐαραράνης (p. 122.41, etc.). It would be surprising, then, if Zonaras went back to Agathias for Shāhpuhr I.

On the other hand, he could not have found the tales of Shāhpuhr's cruelty in Syncellus, who did not carry his copying of Agathias' passage as far as this (see my article in *CQ*; Syncellus, Bonn ed., 676.15f., is from Agathias, p. 84. 109f.). Syncellus ends his section with a list of Sassanian kings extracted from Agathias, p. 120f., but without any of the details that Agathias gives (Nöldeke, *Tabarī*, 400, note 1; my article, 83). Can we suggest another, later source?

De Boor scouted the idea that Zonaras, Bonn ed., 594.15f., could come from the anonymous continuator of Dio Cassius (*BZ*, 1 [1892], 28). But despite de Boor, the date of the anonymous has not yet been fixed with any degree of certainty. If I am right in supposing that Zonaras used Syncellus and not a source common to Syncellus as well as himself, we need to look for a source later than Syncellus. It would be an economical hypothesis to suppose that the anonymous continuator of Dio used Syncellus and Agathias as well as Dio and Herodian, and that Zonaras got his notices of the Sassanian dynasty from the anonymous. This would explain the difficulty in placing the anonymous earlier than Syncellus (de Boor's candidate is Peter the Patrician)—namely that Syncellus shows no traces of Dio or Herodian. And it would relieve us of the need to multiply Zonaras' sources still further, by having to postulate a source apart from the anonymous which used both Syncellus and Agathias.

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